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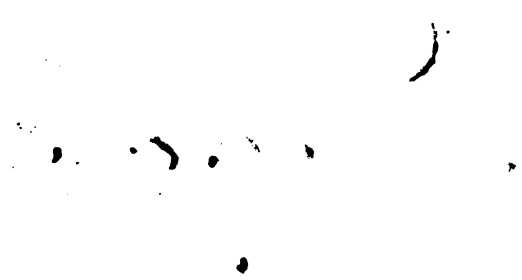
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ON STONE BY R. J. LANE, A.R.A. FROM A SKETCH BY JOHN WATKINS.

*Yrs very Sincerely
Yr Churchman*

THE Church Goer.

Rural Rides;

OR

Calls at Country Churches.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED, NOTICES

OF THE

REVERENDS DRS. PUSEY, JOSEPH WOLFF,

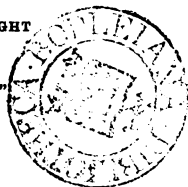
HENRY PHILPOTTS, BISHOP OF EXETER,

AND

FRANCIS CLOSE, VICAR OF CHELTENHAM.

J. Leech

" IF IN YOUR BOUNDS YOU CHANCE TO LIGHT
UPON A SLEEK SNUG FODGEL WIGHT,
O' STATURE SHORT, * * *
THAT'S HE—MARK WHEEL."



Bristol :

JOHN RIDLER. LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.

1847.

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DEDICATION.

TO MY LANDLADY.

MY DEAR MADAM,

ONE whom I have heard you say you often saw—the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge—writes : “There are three classes into which all the women past seventy that ever I knew were to be divided : 1st. that dear old soul ; 2nd. that old woman ; 3rd. that old witch.” I shall number you amongst the first though you have not attained to the portentous epoch of three score years and ten, and that you may live to pass, and long to look back with pleasure even upon “serious seventy,” is my most sincere wish. And when you do depart, it is my further prayer, with Sir Thomas Overbury’s milk maid, “That you may die in spring, and being dead may have good store of flowers stuck round about your winding sheet.”

On you I bestow the compliment of this Dedication. It is a poor compliment, perhaps, if estimated by its actual value. I know, however, you will not look at it in this light, but receive it (as it is intended), as some small public acknowledgment, for thirty years of kindness and attention shown to a lonely old bachelor while living under your roof.

It is to no purpose that you may now say (as you often said before) that you have done nothing more than your duty ; that I paid my rent promptly and punctually, and never allowed a quarter day to pass that

I did not call you up stairs and discharge the debt of three months. But there are many ways of doing one's duty, and you have done yours with so constant and unostentatious a regard for my comfort—undeterred by the sly hints of your neighbours that you had a design on the person or purse of the old bachelor—that I determined your honest though humble worth should be as gratefully set forth as it has been noiselessly shown. Nor do I now merely allude to mere positive and practical household matters, though I confess myself indebted to your culinary labours for substantive benefits far surpassing the pen and ink panygerics of fair correspondents without number, for while their fingers have been fashioning compliments your honest hands have had a more homely engagement, in shaping

“Solid pudding against empty praise:”

but to the kind indulgence and forbearance that so resolutely over looked, or rather affected never to notice, any or all the little flaws or infirmities of temper which I may, and, indeed, must, have betrayed in the course of our long acquaintance. Jeremy Taylor (whose Sermons you have so often borrowed from me on a Sunday) says, “It is no great thing to live lovingly with good natured, with humble and meek persons; but he who can do so with the froward and the wilful, with the peevish and perverse, he only hath true charity.” I do not wish to be supposed to be—nor do I think I am—habitually testy; but there are certain fidgetty and fitful moods inevitable to long years of solitude, which I, any more than others of “my order,” cannot hope to have escaped, and of which, indeed, I am only too conscious. It is my fate, rather than my fault, to have reached, at least, the confines of old age in that state which is poetically and popularly called “single blessedness”—which I trust, however, is not as great a sin as Georgius Wicelius (a learned and ancient divine) describes it to be, for, in his Twenty-six Arguments in favour of Marriage, he says “*Persuasus* (pardon me, dear Madam, for quoting Latin), *neminem, posse neque pie vivere,*

neque bene mori, citra uxorem :" which is, when interpreted, I am persuaded that no man can live piously or die happily without a wife. I think and trust Wicelius was wrong, but had he been less serious and sweeping in his condemnation of celibates, and contented himself with showing that they were subject to infirmities of temper and teasing habits, which the more disciplined and decided *pater familias* never felt or found, I should have pleaded guilty to, and you, dear Madam, had you thought fit, could have confirmed, the impeachment.

Since such is my lot, however, I look upon myself as fortunate indeed in having selected for my shelter and sojourn the roof-tree of one, who has so considerately and kindly forborne on all occasions. Your philosophy and philanthropy have never been so manifest as when gout or rheumatism tortured your lodger, and I have often secretly admired the little arts which you employed to induce me to quit the house and my books, when I have, perhaps, too intently for my health, confined myself to the precincts of the one and the perusal of the other,—a gentle compulsion, not unnecessary for those who forget that air and exercise are more requisite than reading. As Marsilius Ficinus, who wrote on the subject of preserving the soundness of body and mind, says, "Other men look to their tools : a painter will wash his pencils ; a smith will look to his hammer, anvil, forge ; a husbandman will mend his plough-irons, and grind his hatchet if it be dull ; a falconer, or huntsman, will have an especial care of his hawks, hounds, horses, dogs, &c. ; a musician will string or unstring his lute ; only scholars neglect that instrument (their brain and spirits I mean) which they daily use, and by which they range over all the world, which by much study is consumed."—(*De Sanit: Tuend: lib. 2.*) I pretend to the name neither of scholar nor student, for my youth was spent on the summit of a counting-house stool, and it was late in life when I escaped from the ledger to the library ; still my old book and armed chair would have often detained me within doors during the long summer evenings, when all the world and the world's wives were sauntering

abroad, were it not that by brushing my hat, placing my cane at hand, and significantly hinting at the salubrity of the season, you thus delicately induced me to close my volumes and sally forth for a refreshing walk.

My dear Madam, forgive an old man's vanity, which prompts him to load an Address to a simple woman with an affectation and display of erudition. But all the Latin and learning are for the public—all the candour and sincerity for you. The secret of this Dedication I have hitherto kept to myself, and hope the surprise will not prove unpleasant. I have long contemplated acknowledging your kindness in some way, beyond the warm thanks that have responded to every pot of marmalade and pound of preserves, you have presented me with. I was, however, divided between a silver teapot and a public compliment, and have at length chosen the latter, not so much because it will be less expensive to me, as that I trust it will prove more agreeable to you.

Believe me, my dear Madam,

Yours very sincerely,

THE CHURCH-GOER.

GILLYFLOWER COTTAGE,

1st July, 1847.

PREFACE.

HERE is another book—a second offence against the public, and before, perhaps, I have obtained forgiveness for the first. I am a hardened literary sinner. I got a little patted on the back by a few good natured friends for my effort No. 1, so, avid of praise, I must forsooth produce a No. 2. This, however, is always the way, when a man turns author, in his old age. “The great misery of late marriages,” said Johnson, according to Mrs. Piozzi, “is that the unhappy produce of them becomes the plaything of dotage,”—and so it is with the old man’s literary issue: he is never tired of having his little book-bantling on his knee; and his happiness he thinks complete when he has another to keep it company, seldom dreaming all the while he dangles his darlings, that it is his parental fondness alone which prevents him from seeing that a feeling public are pitying, and the less indulgent sneering at his drivelling vanity.

However, let this pass. ’Tis an unpleasant thought; and, indeed, it is, only to anticipate what others may possibly say, and thus disarm criticism by a little well-timed self-humiliation, that I touch upon it all. The book is out now—bound, gold lettered, and illustrated—and the next business is to coax the people to buy it: for, independent of the pleasure which a good sale must afford me as an author, I have an interest in this number which I had not in the first—I *am to share in the profits!* And I mean, should any accrue, to insist upon the terms of agreement, and to apply the produce to the purchase of the Oxford Edition of the Fathers. You, therefore, see I am not going to indulge in such

desperate acts of prodigality as some persons, who write sermons with the munificent intention, openly avowed on the title pages, of building a church with all the discourse may bring forth after the expenses of printing. I mean to be myself, on this occasion, the object of my own liberality.

It does not comport with the dignity of an author, that he should further press the purchase of his own wares; but, if I estimate a generous public aright, they will not allow a becoming modesty to bar my benefit,—I must not beg, but I will not turn my back upon a buyer. It was an historical fiction which represented Belisarius holding out his hat for an obolus, but had he been offered one I do not fancy he would have refused it.

In the preface to the *City Churches* I said all that I could say in apology for, or, defence of, my ecclesiastical pilgrimages. It did not, however, propitiate some people, who have since then read me many sharp lectures, and sent me no small number of threatening letters.irate clergymen denounced, puissant churchwardens hinted at horse-ponds, and more than one parish clerk was heard to speak of personal violence should he be so fortunate as to meet with me again; so that I began to think it was not safe for me to venture beyond the boundaries of the ancient city and the beat of the new policemen: still I have escaped up to the present, and live to breathe the poetic prayer of honest Charles Cotton:—

“ Lord! would men let me alone,
What an over happy one
Should I think myself to be,
Live but undisturbed and free.
I would, maugre Winter's cold,
And the Summer's worst excess,
Try to live out to seventy full years old,
And all the while, without an envious eye
On any thriving under fortune's smile,
Contented live, and then contented die.”

I shall not add much more on a subject which must be more or less egotistical. I only hope the *Rural Rides* will prove as refreshing to the reader as they were to the writer; for

though I have been out as well when the snow as when the new mown sweet smelling hay was on the ground—as well when the road-side hedges were armed with pointed icicles as when the white May clothed them with glory—I have, on the whole, gained health and strength by my equestrian rambles, and trust the benefit I have gained for myself, will more than counterbalance any harm I may have done to others.

Am I expected to account for the vanity which prefixes my portrait to this little book? If so, all I have to say is, that having detected the artist one day in church attempting to take my likeness on the blank page of his Common Prayer-book, that he should not desecrate the day or the place, I begged he would call at my lodgings and do it at his leisure. Having completed, he kindly made me a present of it, so, as it cost me nothing, I thought I would not lose an opportunity of distinction, but take this mode of descending to those respectable though shadowy people who are to come after us, called posterity. To this the reader owes my portrait, “on stone, by R. J. Lane, A.R.A., from a sketch by John Watkins”—a boon I trust he rightly estimates.

"I hope I shall do nobody wrong to speak what I think, and deserve no blame in imparting my mind."—*Democritus, Junior* (Burton), An. Mel., Sect. iii., Memb. 1.

By the Church-Goer ;

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BRISTOL TIMES,
AND HIS READERS, AND MY OWN,

These Presents Greeting,

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—The old man, whose prosings you endured with such praiseworthy fortitude some months ago, is about to make a second experiment on your patience. The most indulgent natures are those oftenest imposed upon : and the only plea the CHURCH-GOER can advance in mitigation is, that on parting from you last June he intimated that it was just possible he might bore you again. You seldom find that people keep their word for good with half the tenacity that they do for evil, and in fulfilling his promise the CHURCH-GOER feels he might have been forgiven a less implacable memory.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Thus far had I gone in the third person, but finding it a stiff and awkward mode of communication between two old friends—feeling I could not express myself with half the cordial freedom that I wished towards my kind and indulgent readers, I set it aside for the intimate and easy familiarity of the first and second person. Well, how are you ? It seems an age, a hundred years, since we last met, or rather parted, by the Orphan Asylum (I think it was) on Ashley Hill, and my eyes if not moist were “heavy with the weight of unshed tears.” Old and vain, however as I am, I cannot pretend to think that you were equally affected at the separation ; but still I am convinced, from a thousand little proofs of your good nature which you gave me, that you did not see the old man depart without feeling at least a commiseration for his loneliness, or turning to have another glimpse of his snuff-brown coat before he was quite out of

sight; and I thought (was I mistaken?) a whispered "God speed him" reached me as I trudged on my silent way. If it was not so, do not undeceive me, for I would not have the illusion removed—I would still hope that something like a kindly *impression* had grown up between us during our acquaintance, though we never literally looked each other in the face; for an agreeable intimacy may be established without this. Butler (not the Bishop) tells us metaphysicians are of opinion that angels and souls departed, being divested of all grosser matter, understand each other's sentiments by intuition, and consequently maintain a sort of conversation without the organs of speech; so, though you and I have never met, and could not be supposed to hold an actual interview, yet let me hope that, divested of the grosser matter which clogs all sympathetic intercourse, we, as it were, intuitively understood each other, and established a kind and pleasing acquaintance without the aid of actual conversation, as it is ordinarily interpreted. For my part I am ashamed to say with what heavyheartedness I took my leave on that occasion. Could you have heard, instead of read, my last "farewell," you would have perceived a little huskiness in my voice, but let that pass: suffice it to say, that after a last fond lingering look behind I took my homeward path, my only solacing reflection the hope that we might meet again; though I secretly determined not to trespass too soon or too hastily on you a second time, if I could find any other employment for an old man's leisure. But my brief literary existence I found spoiled me for the little minutiae of an old bachelor's daily life, and the trifling tasks in which before my *public career* (I like a large phrase) I took pleasure. The geraniums were my only resource, cutting time was at hand, so I set about slipping "Grampions" and "Great Dukes," "Conservatives" and "Nitidums," "Victory's" and "Duchesses of Buccleugh," with a desperate resolve to forget the charms of composition now given up; but to no pur-

pose; I had tasted the weekly excitement of preparing, and the weekly gratification of reading, my own writings in print: and Palergoniums I found possessed no pleasure for me like this. I tried to read newspapers and books, but other people's efforts had no attraction for me like my own. I hope my candour will not cause me to suffer in your estimation, dear reader; but I am frank with you, for where there is no confidence there can be, I think, no friendship; and I run the risk in my "Confessions" (which are not fortunately so flagrant as those of Jean Jacques Rousseau) of being thought less wise and more vain than many may have deemed me, that you may see I do not affect to be what I am not.

I think I have said enough to show you that the life of an old bachelor, who had no graver business to employ his time than rearing geraniums, is not a very eventful one, and that the discontinuance of my weekly task was to me a sore deprivation—it left me from Saturday to Saturday without an object, and living in my lodgings, and looking down during the long evening on a little garden, was all the variety that life seemed to have: besides old men are usually garrulous, and my weekly paper was a pleasant way I had of getting rid of my small talk.

Nevertheless, I question with so many motives if I should have resumed my pen (no, no, "*resumed my pen*" is too pompous a phrase, rather read recommenced my gossip) were it not for another incident which I shall hereafter explain. I got no hint to begin again—none of these small but *substantial* proofs of public approval which serve at once as significant testimonials of the past, and encouragements for the future. I hope I shall not in consideration of my natural delicacy be pressed too hard for my meaning; but I may be pardoned perhaps for saying that, whilst I have read of slippers and surplices presented to popular curates, not even a pair of cork-soled shoes have found their way to a certain snuff-coloured coated person, whom I

might mention, "as a slight testimonial of the regard in which he was held." Not even did the editor of this paper, who disposed of three additional copies every week to as many old ladies, whom I might name, and all through my contributions, think a little token in the shape of a gold pencil-case deserved.

It seems, however, that if the public in general, and a newspaper proprietor in particular, were insensible to my merits, a coterie of various aged ladies were not quite as oblivious of my existence. A month since, as leaning listlessly in my arm-chair, and tired of a solitary life, I repeated from Larry Sterne, "Surely—surely, man! it is not good for thee to sit alone—thou wast made for social intercourse and gentle greetings," when my landlady (kind soul) opened the door with a preliminary tap, and handed me a note in a plain fine-paper envelope, with the prettiest little seal and prettiest little device, too minute, however, for my eyes to make out. "Thank you, Mrs. Smith," said I, and she left the room, and I turned over the tiny epistle twice or three times, amusing myself with conjecturing the contents without breaking the wax. It was a most lady-like missive, genteel in the character of its shape and superscription. It is not a tailor's bill, nor anything like it, thought I; besides my snuff-brown coat was paid for before I put it on my back—it is not a druggist's circular, it does not smell of civet. Could it be a love letter? Foolish old man, who ever dreamt of falling in love with a person posting from half a century to three score years? When I was ill six months ago, some one (from my heart I forgive them their dismal joke) enclosed me an undertaker's card: but this could not be a repetition of a hoax more thoughtless, I hope, than wicked.

I broke the seal, and read—

"— DORCAS SOCIETY.

"VENERABLE SIR,

"Perceiving that for some time you have completed your church peregrinations, we beg to renew (which we do cordially) the invitation given you some two months since, to visit our *sew ing soirees*. Our next meeting is at Mrs. —, — Place; an easy chair, a soft pair of

slippers, and a cup of souchong are heartily at your service. We will make you as comfortable as we can: your society is what we mainly covet, but if you bring a book with you, and read what is most agreeable to yourself, and you think most useful to us, our obligation will be the greater.

"Earnestly praying your attendance, I beg, venerable Sir, to subscribe, (for self and fellows) your's sincerely,

MARIA ———, Hon. Sec."

It could not come more opportunely. "Surely, surely, man, it is not good for thee to sit alone," and with such an offer of good society you shall not.

The following Monday evening—seven to the minute—found me, after crossing a trim little garden in front, and with my snuff-coloured coat brushed to perfection, and my shoes smartly polished, before a green hall-door answering the number in my note, with the brightest brass knocker and handle, and a smart scraper shining with black lead, and looking so neat that I could not find it in my heart to soil it with my cork soles. I knocked; and the door was immediately opened by a pretty, nicely-dressed girl, evidently of the class called "parlour maids;" and here let me pause for a moment to say a word in praise of this order of domestics. No significantly arch smiles if you please, kind reader; a man of my sober age and habits can do so I hope without provoking a joke. I like your parlour maid, with her clean gown, neat cap, and agreeable face, better than a hundred footmen with their servile pertness, and their awkward calves packed into white stockings, and their snub noses thrust up into the air with starched neckcloths; and when this pretty little maid, looking as refreshingly pleasant as a May morning, opened the door, civility and respectful welcome beaming from her face, I felt myself at home. "Whom shall I say, Sir?" said she, modulating her voice to ask an abrupt question in the softest tone, as taking my hat and cane from me she hung one on a brass cloak-pin, and placed the other in a neat umbrella stand. "The CHURCH-GOER, my good child," said I, and you should have seen the delighted welcome that kindled in her eyes; and, oh, the delightful satisfaction

I felt to think that even the old snuff-colour was not unknown to her. I do not pretend to judge what fame may be to your fighting or forensic hero, but this to me was glory: even she had heard of the CHURCH-GOER: possibly she had heard her mistress speak of me, possibly she had picked up the paper in the parlour on a Saturday morning; but still it was evident the name was no stranger to her: it was worth writing quires for such a reward, and in the triumph of that moment, in the little celebrity to which that simple girl paid her smiling homage, I envied neither William Pitt nor the Duke of Wellington their reputation.

"The Church-Goer, ma'am," said she, opening the little drawing-room door, and a good-natured looking person about—but there, I am no judge of ages—rose with a bright smile of cheerful welcome and alacrity to receive me. "Miss —— and Miss ——," said she, introducing me to two young ladies, who with myself were the only visitors who had yet arrived. "It is *so* good, *so* kind of you," she continued, while the younger of her two companions—who might be one or two-and-twenty, with pretty eyes, and brown hair which fell in ringlets in front—rolled a large easy chair for me near the table: "it is *so very* good of you to come, and no amusement to offer, and no society but a few ladies." "Madam," I replied, "if I were a fine young gentleman, instead of a sickly old one, I should make a gallant speech, and tell you how far preferable to me is the society and refining influence of a few cheerful, sensible, agreeable women to the boisterous excitement of male company, or even the literary rivalry of male conversation; but being as I am I beg—"

"I do not know what you are going to beg," interposed my hostess, good-humouredly interrupting me, and glancing at a French clock on the mantel-piece, "but I must beg your pardon: the fact is, it is now five minutes past seven, when according to rule our proceedings commence, though only two or three should have arrived. Before we begin work, however, some

of us usually read a short Psalm, and perhaps you have no objection to 'act the Clericus,' as our curate calls it."

I took the large old Bible from the same pretty hands that rolled the chair for me, and as our entertainer specified a "short Psalm," I selected the shortest, the 117th.* I shall not attempt to describe our little group at the moment; but to me, as I made a poor attempt to perform the parson's part for those gentle and kind beings so much my juniors, I felt my situation if not patriarchal almost parental. Fancy me in an easy chair and soft slippers, bending over my big book with, I had almost called them, *my* little family around me: or if you cannot realize our evening's coterie without aid, perhaps a rough sketch may further assist your imagination.



And now, my dear friends, not to trespass too far at first upon your kindness, perhaps you will permit me to tell you in a future paper what next and further happened at our little meeting, and what are the plans for my future peregrinations.

* It is remarkable, that of so short a Psalm one verse is quoted in the New Testament by St. Paul; the second verse is explained, though not quoted.—*Horne*.

The Church-Goer

DETERMINES AT THE DORCAS ON DOING SOMETHING.

KNOCK after knock at the door announced every ten minutes a new accession to the number of our visitors : they were ladies of all ages, but I was the only " Lord of the Creation " amongst them, and the attention and praise they bestowed upon me was enough to turn any old man's head. They worked away meanwhile, and laughed and talked of the respective merits of their respective Ministers, of visiting societies, the affairs of the parish, Evangelicals, Puseyites, Popery, the probability of the curate's being married, of stone altars, and love matches, until they talked themselves out of breath, and then inquired if I would be kind enough to read something interesting and useful. I said that before leaving home I had made an extract from a work which I thought possessed some interest and advantage for ladies. The Roman population did not call on Mark Anthony to read Cæsar's will with more energy than my fair companions did on me to proceed with my extract. " Some delightful little scrap, as one of them ventured to anticipate, " from the Old Fathers." I did not undeceive her, but read as follows :—

" Making tea is a very simple process, and consists merely of pouring boiling water upon the leaf. In making both tea and coffee, I believe it is better to use water which has only just boiled, than that which has been long over the fire. The latter, I fancy, has something vapid

about it, but of this I am not certain. Soft water I have always understood to be preferable to hard. It is scarcely necessary to say that in order to make good tea, it is requisite to provide a good material. The process I should recommend, as most certain to prove satisfactory, is as follows. Have a kettle in the room. As soon as the water boils, pour some into the tea pot to heat it; then put in as much tea as will produce the desired strength, not by long infusion, but almost immediately. Pour the water hot from the fire upon the tea. Put the quantity you like of sugar and good cream into your cup, and pour the tea upon them, stirring it as you pour, and all one way round, which causes a smoothness and amalgamation very agreeable to the palate. I am now supposing you to be drinking tea for the sake of the tea. Under other circumstances you must do as well as you can! During the season of fires, I think a kettle much preferable to an urn, as ensuring a better condition of the water. With respect to the look of the thing, that is no consideration with me in comparison with the real advantage. As to the trouble of reaching it, that is not much; and there is nothing good to be had without some trouble. Letting tea stand long to get the strength out, or putting it near the fire to stew, is a very erroneous practice. The quicker it is made the more delicate is the flavour. Long infusion makes it coarse and harsh. For this reason the second cup cannot be expected to be as good as the first; but I recommend a habit to be acquired of taking only one cup on ordinary occasions. I think more weakens the digestive powers. A habit of sipping, instead of gulping, will make a small quantity produce as much enjoyment as a large one, and the difference as to health and elasticity of tone is immense. This question of quantity I recommend to the consideration of ladies, some of whom are apt to think that there is no harm from liquids except from strength."

And this, ladies, said I, bowing, terminates my extract. They looked surprised. They evidently calculated on a chapter from St. Augustine, Ignatius, or Jeremy Taylor; and the lady of the house hardly knew whether or not to consider it a hit at her Souchong which we had just had: I begged, however, to remove at once any such impression. I selected the subject, I said, because I thought it of *every day* importance, and especially to ladies; and a good cup of tea was not quite so common as some people imagined, so that any useful information on the manufacture of so agreeable a beverage could not be said to be without its advantage.

They took it all in very good part, and the lady of the house saying the period of the evening usually set apart for business having now arrived, she should call on the fair Secretary to read the minutes of the last meeting. The young lady thus appealed to, taking a

small roll of paper out of her work box, proceeded to read as follows, and not a little to my surprise :—

At a meeting of the — Dorcas Society, held on the — day of —, at Mrs. — house, in — Row,
Mrs. — in the Chair,

Proposed by Miss —, seconded by Mrs. —,

Resolved, 1st.—That this society perused with great satisfaction, and saw with regret the termination of the Church-Goer's visits to the various Churches of Bristol.

Proposed by Mrs. —, seconded by Mrs. —,

2.—That this meeting do recommend their venerable friend to extend his peregrinations to some of the country churches in the neighbourhood, which he might conveniently do on horseback.

Proposed by Miss —, seconded by Miss —,

3.—That our venerable friend be respectfully requested to receive as a slight testimonial of our respect, the trifling sum of £25, to be expended in the purchase of a horse for such and said purpose.

Proposed by Mrs. —, seconded by Mrs. —,

4.—That our esteemed friend be affectionately admonished to purchase none but a quiet animal, on which he may, without his friends feeling anxiety, entrust his precious and valuable person.

As you may suppose, these resolutions took me completely by surprise: I saw, however, I could not, without hurting their feelings, refuse a compliment paid in such a spirit, so without further parley I consented to receive the money, and promised to comply with the request.

Having resolved on starting a horse, the next question was where, when, and how to buy it: the fact was I knew no more about horses than I did about a north-west passage; and as for points and all that, I might as well have gone to purchase a rhinoceros, so far as my judgment extended to symmetry, sinew, and shape. And still I knew (as well as the fair resolution-ists) it was not every horse that would suit me; in fact there were very few that would. It would be rash

in me to say I was never six times on a beast's back in my life, but I think I might safely assert my feats of equestrianism never extended to the full dozen, so I must have a sober quiet "bit of flesh:" none of your flying Childers, or Godolphin Arabians, or "grey Momuses," to carry me some fine Sunday morning like a Mazeppa or madman through a congregation, crying out "Stop'im:" yet I must not have a poor broken down brute either, for falling was quite as bad as running away. The best thing was to go to the next bazaar sale and select for myself, and with this intent I took up a newspaper to see if there was any thing offered that might suit me.

The first "lot" that caught my eye was "a well bred bay gelding, a superior hunter; has been hunted with the Queen's stag hounds, and at Melton—equal to twelve stone across any country." This would not exactly suit; I wanted something to carry me to church, not across any country. The next was, "a grey Irish gelding, rising five years, 15h. 3in., rides well on road, and promises to make a good hunter." This would not do either, I did not like his nation; if the horses were like the men, they were too mercurial for a person of my sober habits: besides, he might be disposed to "repeal the union" between man and beast, and think it a very meritorious thing to leave an elderly Saxon on the road side. "Lot 3, a bay horse 'Driver,' a good hunter." I'd as soon think of backing Bucephalus. "Lot 4, a bay filly, by Colonel." Too young, I didn't like disparity of ages between horse and rider. "Lot 5, a pair of forest ponies." "They may be Dr. Ashley's perhaps, and one of them might do," was my first thought, but Triptolemus Yellowly crossed my mind immediatly after, and I read on. Lots of hunters of all qualities and capacities followed: some first rate fencers, and others competent to carry the Irish giant across any country, but the "Church-Goer" in a "bit of pink," and a pair of top boots, was an idea not to be dwelt on. The advertisement,

however, stated that there were "several other good and servicable animals to be offered on the day of sale:" so hoping I might find one to suit amongst the undistinguished "ruck," I attended on the following Thursday.

Collected round a little green rostrum at the upper end of the bazaar, was a small knot of men—some dozen gentlemen, and about the same number of horse dealers. They looked at me, and possibly discovering something very unequestrian in my appearance, one or two of them smiled. The "first lot," a tall gray horse, was being led out at the moment by a groom; he was walked up to the rostrum, and three or four knowing looking dealers, in top boots and sporting cut coats, proceeded to examine him, passing their hands down his fore and hind legs, and peering into his eyes, and pulling his lips asunder to look at his teeth: the brute was then trotted up and down, a man scampering after him and cracking a long whip. This was or had been a hunter, so I waited for the next, which was a savage looking powerful black, that kicked up its heels the moment it was trotted out, putting me in mortal terror of my life. I need not tell the reader this was not the kind of creature I wanted. Lot 4 was a gaunt, grave, Roman-nosed quadruped, that looked as if he had spent the bloom of his youth at funerals. At this moment it struck me that there was something so very respectable and honorable in the face of my friend in the rostrum, I had better at once place myself in his hands; so going round and plucking Mr. Leigh by the skirt of the coat, I told him in a few words my business, and my willingness to confide my cause to him. "Very well, Sir," said he smiling; "there are many more lots to come; see what you like yourself, and I will say to the best of my ability as to whether the animal will suit you or not." Satisfied with this assurance I stood patiently by, while hunter after hunter, and carriage horse after carriage horse were being knocked down. At length Mr. L. cried out,

"Lot 20," and looking across at me he said in a low tone, "perhaps this might suit you, Sir." The head of a little roan animal protruded from the stall, followed by a round plump carcase admirably in keeping. Had my friend Leigh, like some deity in the artistical contest of the Gods of old, made a steed, he could not have fashioned one more to my fancy: it was neither a horse nor a pony, but it was between both—a kind of intermediate stage, commonly known, I was subsequently informed, by the name of "Cob." It was plump and stout, but slow, for when the man cracked the whip the only symptoms of increased activity which it evinced was by wagging its little tail rather briskly above its round fat quarters: it seemed as if it thought it undignified to use any less staid or sober pace than a walk, which it did well, though all the cracking would not induce it to do more.

"Gentlemen," commenced Mr. Leigh, "a roan cob, called in the catalogue John Bunyan, aged." "John Bunyan," thought I, "I'd buy him for that name alone," not that I am an unqualified admirer of my friend of the Pilgrim's Progress, but there was something so odd in the selection of the nomenclature. I moved forward to examine "John," but gave way to three dealers who pushed in before me. One felt his legs, another examined his eyes and teeth, and as they did not seem to have any fault to find, I began to fear I might possibly be outbid in Bunyan. "Give him another turn," said the most knowing looking of the three, and John got another turn: on reaching the rostrum again Mr. Horsedealer looked significantly at that region of his side under which the lungs are supposed to be, and then after a momentary contemplation gave poor John two such sudden sharp and decisive thumps in the ribs (meant I afterwards learnt to try his wind) that the little horse (and who would not?) coughed as often in reply. Now, though it is quite natural for man or horse, when either gets a couple of punches in the side, to cough; the horsedealers

shrugged their shoulders, and made way for me. "It's all hard meat," said Mr. L., as I laid my hand on the crest, and it was hard enough. The little horse let me handle him quietly; there was something of friendly salutation in the wag of his tail, and I almost thought (perhaps it was fancy) he gave a knowing side wink at me, as much as to say, "We'll get on well together—we were made for each other."

John was put up for £10: "twelve," "thirteen," "fourteen," were offered in quick succession, and I soon found that though the dealers could shrug their shoulders, they could still bid. "Fifteen," said I; a gentleman in a white cord trousers, "sixteen;" a titled lady's groom from Clifton, "seventeen:" "eighteen," said I once more; "nineteen," from the gentleman in the white cords. I paused for a moment. "It's just the horse for your purpose, Sir," said Leigh looking over at me: "then twenty pounds for John Bunyan," exclaimed I; "twenty-one, though it's fit for nothing but an old man," added the gentleman in the white cords. "Then an old man," said I, understanding his hint, "bids twenty-two."

"No advance on twenty-two," demanded Mr. L., after a moment's silence and looking round. "Is there no advance on twenty-two?—the horse is worth thirty," and then after waiting another minute, "if there's no advance I *must* knock him down for twenty-two—going, going for twenty-two," and he held the little hammer poised in the air—"gone for twenty-two," and the hammer fell with a sharp knock: then turning to me he said, "You've a bargain, Sir." "What name, Sir?" said the clerk. I hesitated for a second. "Oh, a gentleman in a snuff-brown coat," said I, handing in four five-pound notes and two sovereigns. "John Bunyan—a *gent* in a snuff-brown coat," repeated the clerk in the same business-like, imperturbable tone. The gentleman in the white cords congratulated me on my bargain. "John Bunyan, Sir," said he, "is a stout little horse, and if he carries you *in* is able to

carry you *out* of the *Slough of Despond*." I thanked the gentleman in the white cords for his joke, and proceeded to admire my purchase.

John Bunyan was just the horse to my mind: he was slow, sure, and singular; he would not run away with me; he would not fall with me, and there was no mistaking him—and the last was not the least consideration. Poggio tells a story of an Italian, who allowed all the persons at an inn to depart before him; for, not knowing his own horse, he let others retire with theirs, satisfied that when the rest were gone he might safely presume the one left behind to be his: and I confess, were I the owner of an ordinary animal, so uncritical an eye have I for symmetry, I should often be in the predicament of the Italian, and find it difficult to recognize my bay or brown (let us suppose it,) amongst many bays or browns. But with John Bunyan there was no danger of this—there was an identity and idiosyncrasy about him in character, colour, shape, and size, which distinguished him from nine hundred and ninety-nine animals out of a thousand; he was like no other horse but himself; he was, as the poet says—

"Himself his only parallel."

His very slowness—some call it laziness—enhances his value in my eyes: he has a most imperturbable solidity of carriage, nothing puts him out of his way; he has but one gait, and he seems resolved that nothing shall accelerate him out of it. Boileau wrote an epigram on Don Quixote's steed, in which, after extolling his many great and good qualities, he says, he trotted night and day by hills and vales, "and the historian records, he galloped *once* in his life."

Tel fut ce roi des bons chevaux

Rossinante, le fleur des coursiers d'Ibère

Qui trottant jour et nuit et par monts et par vaux,

Galopa, dit l'histoire, une fois en sa vie.

And so, with a slight alteration, the satirist's words might be said to apply to John Bunyan: his staple pace is a walk; and if the historian should have to

record a solitary deviation from this at a future day, I am quite certain it will never exceed a slight canter. However, as I said before, his celerity is quite sufficient for my ordinary requirements; and I hope the foul fiend will never make me, as Poor Tom says in Lear, "proud of heart to ride a high-trotting horse;" for, mounted and ready for the road, John Bunyan and his master have no ambition to cut a more imposing figure in their "Pilgrim's Progress" to country churches than the following profile presents :—



The Church=Goer's
RURAL RIDES;
OR
CALLS AT COUNTRY CHURCHES.

Chew-Magna.

My first ride—my first essay on John Bunyan was, you may be sure, too important an event to be lightly regarded by me. My razor might be heard going on its strop an hour earlier than usual; and my estimable landlady got no less than two pairs of bellows to bear upon the kitchen fire, in order to urge the kettle to an expeditious boil, that I might have my breakfast if possible by half-past seven. My snuff-colour, neatly folded and scrupulously brushed, lay with my riding gloves on a chair in the parlour; and my new whip hung imposingly over the mantel-piece. It was an important morning: the cat, as if conscious of something unusual, purred restlessly around me; my landlady gave me a paper of cayenne lozenges, to keep the night air from finding its way to the interior of my body on my return; and when I started for the stable, the servant maid came running after me with her mistress's respects and a huge pair of brass heel spurs, which her late husband had used in the Royal Gloucestershire Yeomanry Cavalry, and she (poor soul!) thought might be of use to me on my present expedition. I, however, had no notion of employing such murderous implements against John Bunyan's sides, and sent them back.

On entering the stable, John promptly intimated his knowledge of my arrival by a friendly neigh of recognition; and turning round his little plump head, while his manger chain rattled through the ring, he seemed to say, as he eyed me significantly, "Oh, you're come are you?—I'm quite ready to start."

Dear Lady Patrons of the Dorcas, you should have been there to see me mount, not like the mad-cap Prince of Wales,

"Rising from the ground like feathered Mercury,
And vaulting with such ease into my seat,"

but soberly from the summit of a stable stool. I wish you were, for I was anxious that you should see the piece of horse flesh in which I invested your twenty-five pounds—(the odd three, I should have told you before, having gone to the purchase of a saddle). He looked so sleek in his coat, his hoofs so brightly blackened, and his mane so smartly trimmed. Indeed, I was myself so wrapped up in admiration of him, that it was not until he stopped at the corner of the next street, as if expecting some intimation of our intended route, that I bethought me of selecting one; for up to that moment I had not dreamt of our destination, or of the church with which I meant to make a beginning. Somewhat at a loss, I looked around me to collect my thoughts, when the distant Tower of Dundry, which may be seen from almost any part of the city, caught my eye. "For Dundry, John Bunyan," said I, turning his rein in that direction; but I had not got a mile when I resolved on extending my incursion as far as Chew-Magna.

Reader, have you ever mounted Dundry Hill? It is no joke to climb, but having climbed it you do not lose your labour. John seemed to drag his fat sides and my own up the ascent with some toil, and I think if, like the prophet's ass, he had his parts of speech, he would have expostulated with me on the injustice of remaining on his back under such circumstances; but on the preceding night, while I had my feet in the hot water, a twinge or two about the region of my right ankle gave me a hint that I must not take many liberties with my lower limbs, and I thought it better to press a little hard upon my new purchase, than run the risk of being knocked up at the very opening of the campaign.

Half way up the ascent some considerate ancestor of ours, availing himself of a little rivulet which comes rippling, bright and joyous, from the fields to the road side, as if it ran to meet the thirsty traveller with a refreshing draught, has placed a rude trough, which is always full of the cooling element. John looked wistfully at the water, and I allowed him to swallow a few mouthfuls, while I repeated the inscription on the well in *Marmion*—

“ Drink, weary pilgrim, drink and pray
For the kind soul of Sybil Gray.”

No carved stone retains the name or perpetuates the memory of the merciful person, who constructed this simple mode of “entertainment for man and horse” by the road side at Dundry; but so grateful did I feel on John Bunyan’s account for his kind consideration, that I think, had he entreated the prayers of posterity and the passenger by an “*Ora pro me*,” I should have risked an infraction of the Protestant faith by muttering a “*Requiescat in pace*” to his manes, if there be such a thing.

I’m a poor hand at describing scenery: and to tell you the truth, to me most descriptions of scenery are nearly unintelligible—a mere luxurious chaos of hill and vale, trees and rivulets, an indistinct vagueness of verdure and sunshine scattered over the page in “gay confusion,” which I cannot realize, though doubtless the author has it all in his mind’s eye at the time of writing it. I always wish for the pencil and the canvass of the painter as the only medium for conveying my ideas on these occasions, though if the wish were complied with I should still be in the same predicament as ever, as the highest pictorial efforts, of which I am capable, are the portraits of John Bunyan and myself.

I believe with Wordsworth,

“ One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach us more of man,
Of moral, evil, and of good,
Than all that sages can,”

nevertheless I have a reluctance to "babble o' green fields" from a consciousness of my own manifest want of talent in that way. Had I, however, like the Queen at Blair Athol, the advantages of a Brachigrapher to dog my footsteps and those of John Bunyan up the ascent—were

"The prying stranger with his note-book nigh,"

to jot down our pauses at every new prospect, he would possibly make the following minutes of my passage over Dundry. "The Church-Goer pulled up nearly on the summit, and at a point where the prospect looking towards Ashton, Clifton, and Bristol is of a most varied and picturesque character: here he paused for some time wrapt in admiration of the view beneath him;" and if I may be allowed to answer for myself, and take up the narrative on my own account, I may say, I do not know when I was more struck by the beautiful diversity of any landscape. A fertile and hamlet-dotted vale interposed between me and the wooded ridge of hills on the side of which stands Ashton Court, and which are so abruptly divided from the corresponding heights of Clifton by the grand and picturesque ravine that forms a passage for the river Avon: the giant barrenness of St. Vincent's rocks, which first strike the eye from Dundry, give to this gorge a savage character, which is almost increased by the contrast of the adjacent villa-crowned eminence of Clifton. This favoured suburb, with its stately Bath-stone-built crescents and terraces gleaming in the morning sun, was a marked object in the noble view, and seemed to me, removed as I was from the city at that moment, and in the centre of rural life, the palace-like monuments of commercial greatness and social refinement.

But it is from the summit that the vastness of the panorama, stretching far and away on all sides of Dundry, may be seen in its fullness of grandeur. From the formation of the ground you can almost look quite round you: retracing the view from the heights above Bristol to Ashton, you continue your survey over a

wooded vale, bounded by Wraxall and Backwell Hills, and others contiguous to the Channel. From Bishop Sutton in the south the eye passes on over an elevated outline "further east," until it pauses upon that singular freak of folly and senility, Beckford's Tower, in the neighbourhood of Bath; so that the vision, if it be not by this time exhausted with admiration, may still pass on in almost uninterrupted survey and a circle to the point from which it started, and rest once more upon the blue summit of the Monmouthshire hills which may be seen rising in the distant back ground behind Vincent's Rocks. In fact, in the noble expanse of view which I had I felt the sense of sight ache with the intensity of its own transport, and I question if Hannibal, when he pointed out to his hardy followers from the Alps the country of champagne Italy lying far down beneath their feet, beheld such a prospect before him—a prospect so rich in fertility, beauty, and verdure, and smiling prosperity. I believe the land flowing with milk and honey offered no such view to the way-worn child of Israel as he looked over on it from the summit of Mount Pisgah. An eminence like this when all is brightness and greenness, and beauty and repose around one, is the place to feel the influence of an English Sabbath morning, when you look forth on God's created world in its purest and freshest features; and you find, if not Christian impressions forced upon you by the scene, at least a certain kind of natural religion—an instinctive adoration, such as found utterance in the apostrophe of our first father—

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good.

* * * *

Thus wondrous fair, thyself how wondrous then."

All around, earth, air, and sky, seem "eloquent with inarticulate praise" of their great architect: "there is neither speech nor language, but their voices are heard among them;" and the mind of man cannot refuse its meed of gratulation when the landscape is full of it, and the fields and the "hills are joyful together." You

may rest assured that nature herself on such occasions preaches a powerful "Sermon on the Mount."

How long I should have continued absorbed in the splendour of the sight, which I dare say I have described to you in a style of grandiloquent confusion, I cannot say, had not John Bunyan—who I am sorry to see does not seem to have an eye for the "sublime and beautiful," and who appeared in the present instance to have preferred some cockspur which grew in a neighbouring hedge, to the noble view which engrossed his rider—reminded me of mundane matters and of myself and my journey, by drawing me into a rough thorn bush, having forgot his owner's interests altogether in the urgency of his own. I remonstrated with him for conduct which to say the least of it was neglectful, and expressed my surprise that a quadruped of his apparent gravity should not be superior to the vice of covetousness and the charms of cockspur.

Having left Dundry Church on the right we now began to descend, and though the hill on this side is hardly as steep as on the other the declension nevertheless was none of the easiest, and John Bunyan picked up a stone, which I was obliged to dismount to hammer out of his hoof. The view still continued beautiful, and the villages of Winford and Chew Magna almost beneath my feet, and Chew Stoke a little more in the distance, with their pretty Church towers and cottages peering up amongst the trees, added not a little to the truly English character and picturesque quiet of the scene. The Greater Chew, my destination, seemed so snugly ensconced and secluded at the base and beneath the shelter of the giant hill—so remote at once from railroads and cities—that I expected to find every thing in a state of primeval simplicity amongst them; and as I amused myself with speculating as to which might be the parson's or squire's residence amongst the snug country houses upon which I looked down, I also ventured a conjecture or two as to the probable character, occupations,

pursuits, and mode of life of the Minister of such a rural and primitive parish.

The old easy Somersetshire parson—as a *genus*—bore I recollect in my boyish days, a reputation rather for a certain drowsy benevolence of disposition than ministerial activity; and as he dozed away for half a century of afternoons in the same old armed chair, over his diurnal bottle of port, a voice might have appropriately aroused him by shouting the Satire of Erasmus in his ear—

Quid est Sacerd-otium?
(ECHO *respondit*) Otium!

Such a race as appears from his “Imitation of Swift” to have existed in Pope’s time—

Parson, these things in thy possession
Are better than the Bishop’s blessing:
A wife that makes conserve; a steed
That carries double when there’s need;
October store and best Virginia,
Tithe pig and mortuary guinea.

* * * * *
A large Concordance, bound long since;
Sermons to Charles the First, when Prince;
A Chronicle of ancient standing;
A Chrysostom, to smooth—thy band in;
The Polyglott—three parts—my text
Howbeit—likewise, now to my next:
Lo here the Septuagent, and Paul,
To sum the whole—the close of all.
He that has these may pass his life

* * * * *
On Sundays preach and eat his fill,
And fast on Fridays—if he will;
Toast Church and Queen, explain the news,
And talk with churchwardens ’bout pews.

Whether the race was originally libelled or have been recently improved, it is for me and others to find out.

Marvellous is the sagacity of a man’s horse at times: for as we entered the village by one of the two public buildings of the place, the “General Shop,” I perceived that John Bunyan turned his head round and round, and I had little trouble in discovering that he was on the look out for the inn; and as he was kind enough

to undertake the task, I left it entirely to his own discretion. There were two I saw close together, with equally inviting sign-boards—one, the “Bear and Swan,” an odd conjunction, with appropriate device ; the other, “the Pelican,”—I could only hope not “of the wilderness.” John chose the former, after a moment’s scrutiny, and walked into the yard as boldly as if he paid the rent and taxes.

“Whoin be I to gie ’un corn, sar ?” said the stable-man, taking the bridle from my hand, and leading John into a two-stalled stable.

“I’ll give it myself, my good man, when I return from church,” said I, “not that I at all question your probity, or deem that justice might not be done the beast at your hands ; but I find in life, whether it be with the human or the brute creation, the high way to the heart lies between the turnpike gate of the teeth, where those who mean to pass must pay toll. Now, my good friend, for obvious reasons, considering how much we are likely to be together, it is desirable for me to stand well in the esteem and opinion of my horse, who rejoices in the name of John Bunyan ; and to this end, and to cultivate the closest possible friendship, I wish, when I conveniently can, to convey the corn to his manger with my own hands.”

“Yes, sure, measter !” replied the man, with rather a bewildered look ; but I was equally sure he did not understand one word of what I said.

A smart little “Mary, the maid of the Inn,” with black hair and round face, met me with a curtsy of welcome at the back door as I approached.

“What time do prayers commence, my good girl ?” said I, following her into the little bow-windowed parlour to which she led the way, and confiding to her custody my riding-stick.

“Eleven, Sir ; and three in the afternoon ;” and again, after a pause, “Do you dine, Sir ?”

“Service at eleven and three,” thought I, “and dinner between both ; and since the vicar is not very

likely to send the sexton running out after me from church with a parole invitation to eat my mutton with him, I must even suit myself here." But speaking of dining between services reminds me of an interesting anecdote of his parish, which I heard only last week from the rector of Upton, in Gloucestershire. There are eleven old people who for twenty years have attended morning and afternoon service in that church, and who come from a distance of two, three, and four miles; but instead of returning to dinner "between duties," they have been in the habit of each bringing their little frugal meal of bread and cheese in a handkerchief, and eating it in the church, under shelter of which they remain seated from one service to another; thus by this simple and praiseworthy plan availing themselves of the advantages of the full Sabbath prayers, which, if they returned home to their dinners, from their advanced ages, and the distances they would have to travel, they would hardly be able to do. Mark this, you rich, who with the Sabbath bell sending its afternoon call to your drawing rooms, and you who live almost under the shadow of the church tower, yet disregard and neglect the great privilege within your reach; read this, too, you poor, and you who might, without any sacrifice of personal comfort, attend both services, and are yet rarely to be found at either; here is a beautiful and impressive lesson of affectionate devotion set you by these eleven simple peasants of Gloucestershire, who deserve a church, and who will one day rise up in judgment against those who have had in every respect a thousand-fold superior advantages. I don't know when I was so much struck myself with an instance of pure and unaffected piety.*

* It seems that a practice somewhat similar to this obtained in some of the early Christian churches. St. Augustine, in the Sixth Book of his Confessions, (II.) speaks of his mother Monnica bringing with her to the Churches built in memory of the Saints "a basket of festival food," which she partook of herself, and then divided the

But to return to my dinner, or rather my order about my dinner: I said I should have eggs and bacon at one o'clock. Now, I named eggs and bacon, not because it is a very paramount dish with me, but because I have always in my imagination associated it with the country inn, and the clean white table-cloth—the *munda supellex* of my little five-foot favourite Horace, who, by the way, knew more of comfort and the art of giving a small dinner party than all the Walkers in the world, (see his epistle, or rather his invitation, to Torquatus); besides I have a most cheerful idea of the dish, which, for the most part you can hear in the parlour hissing through its process of cooking in the kitchen. A modern monkish poet,* who seems to have entered into the matter with all a churchman's goût, thus describes the delicate details:—

“While the fragrant turf smoke
Curls quite round the pan on the fire,
And the sweet yellow yolk
From the egg shells is broke
In that pan,
Who can,
If he have but the heart of a man,
Not feel the soft flame of desire?”

“You can have eggs and bacon, Sir,” said the girl, who evidently from her tone did not seem to think it quite a Sunday dish, “but there is a leg of mutton roasting at the fire.”

“The leg of mutton will do, my child; give yourself no further trouble, unless perhaps it be convenient to procure a spoonful or two of currant jelly.”

remainder amongst those around her; though by order of St. Ambrose, when Bishop of Milan, the practice was discontinued, and Monnica was forbidden by the door-keeper to take her basket in. St. Augustine also, in the *Civ. Dei*, 1, viii, c. 27, evidently referring to the same custom, says—“They, too, who bring their meals thither (namely, to the Churches), (which the better sort of Christians does not do, and in most countries is no such custom,) yet they who do it, (and having done it they pray, and then remove to eat or give of them to the poor,) seek to have them sanctified through the acceptableness of the martyrs, in the name of the Lord of the martyrs.”

* A Friar Mahony.

The bell had not been long ringing when I entered the churchyard. An inscription, on the front of the organ-loft, informs the curious, who may also become if they like the incredulous, that the church was repaired and *beautified* in some year of our Lord, which I forget. But the question is, as to what our ancestors some two centuries ago meant by beautifying—I fear myself that their ideas on this point consisted in crowding it with cumbrous wood-work, mutilating columns, washing over corbels and carvings, and surrounding unsightly monuments with immense iron railings. Chew Magna does not show more than the average amount of Vandalism to be seen in most of the many beautiful churches of Somersetshire. I fancied I could trace the bad taste of the latter part of the seventeenth century, (a period which appears to have been rather fertile in bunglers), in many parts of the church, which consists of a nave, side aisle, and chancel. In an architectural point of view the tower, which is a handsome one, is perhaps the part of the edifice which I most prefer, and which from the Western approach has a most pleasing effect. I do not know the date of the erection, but the structure appears principally of the perpendicular Gothic.

There are several monuments, which, however, have nothing to boast of. The St. Loes, who seem to have had a good slice of the Manor, if not the whole at one time, still retain some cubic feet of earth there as a reposing place for their remains. In the east end of the north aisle there is an old tomb to them, and from the effigy of Sir John, who lies some seven feet four or five inches long, they appear to have been a well grown family. The lady who sleeps by his side has had her nose worn down by time and attrition. At the east end of the south aisle is a kind of canopied altar tomb to the Baber family, who were indigenous at one time to the parish. It is a very elaborate monument to the bad taste of the period in which it was erected, about 1650: there is a host of little allegorical figures, with

gilt wigs and painted faces, stuck around it, and a profusion of other ornaments, on which a world of gold leaf is expended—gay skulls, brilliant cross bones, and shining shovels: there is no dearth, too, of lackered robes, which, as the male incumbent figure was to all appearances a Judge, were I suppose at the time thought to be eminently appropriate and complimentary. But one of the most grotesque objects I have seen for some time is a painted oak effigy of Sir John Hautville, a little lower down in the same aisle. He is depicted in armour, with a loose red coat without sleeves outside it: Sir John is in a very uncomfortable position, and if there he as little repose about his manes as about his wooden remains I pity him: he is reclining on his left elbow, his head supported on his left hand; his left leg is raised, and he has a lion at his feet, which seems resolutely determined on dining off his spurs: Sir John, with his great red nose and goggle eyes peering out from under his helmet, seems to be regarding the simple congregation with a look so truculent, that one would think the warlike defunct died their creditor for a dozen gales of rent. We are told indeed that the Hautvilles were furious fighters, and therefore most unpleasant neighbours in their day, which was about the date of Edward the Third: and this same Sir John, who when at home called Norton his locality, and was reputed a giant, must have been fond of manly games, for there are two stones about the magnitude of a modest gate-lodge, between Pensford and Chew, which are still called *Hautville's Quoits*, and which are said to have been thrown there by the Knight, whose wooden effigy glared like a giaour on me during the sermon. It is rather fortunate for posterity that there are none of the family left. When I notice an old cross in the churchyard, and a font in the very corner of the west end of the south aisle, and with a covering something like the top of an Indian Pagoda, I think I have recounted every thing that is remarkable in the edifice.

The congregation was not very large at the morning service; but in the afternoon the church was full. The protracted old age and indisposition of the last incumbent entailed a large amount of labour and trouble on his successor. However remote from cities the country has its own abounding and crying vices, and I am told the laxity of morals, the besotted blindness, the spiritual indifference, which at one time prevailed in the parish, required all the energy of an indefatigable, active, and intrepid clergyman to correct. I do not intend to offer any offence to the memory of any one, (and the last incumbent was, I believe, an amiable man), but I think the rural parish, from the indolent and sluggish nature of the peasant's mind, for the most part requires more activity, if possible, on the part of the minister than even a town congregation, and this is a quality which is not always to be found united with old age and indisposition.—Earnest and untiring exertions, and a bold determination to do his duty, on the part of the present vicar, have, however, reclaimed Chew Magna to a state of order, discipline, and public propriety, which renders it, in all that makes a parish socially and spiritually respectable, second to none in the diocese. And there is no clergyman, you may rest assured, who is determined to do his duty, who will not find his labours, however up-hill and hard they may be, eventually crowned with success.

The sermon in the morning, which was preached by the vicar, was a plain, practical, useful discourse, eminently suited to his hearers, with no attempt at theological abstruseness or studied eloquence; and the congregation was on both occasions most attentive.*

* Chew Magna is a great place for ploughing and sheep-shearing matches. I recollect reading an account of one of the latter, held there some two years since, when the estimable chairman, exhorting the successful candidates to good conduct, delivered the following pithy speech—“*Attend to your Clergyman; for if you be good churchmen, you are sure to be good sheep-shearers!*”

On returning to the little inn I found my leg of mutton ready for me. Do you know, I like a comfortable, quiet meal of this kind in the country. I know it is a dictum of a modern author, who is thought quite an oracle in these matters, that a man should avoid dining alone, for solitude begets thought, and thought begets indigestion: but I don't believe him: a man may "chew the cud" of "sweet," not "bitter fancy," while masticating his mutton, with impunity. There is no necessity for trying to square the circle, or troubling one's-self with the theory of parallels, or mentally investigating geometrical angles while you are at your dinner; but I think a little, quiet, easy, pleasing rumination at meal times, leads rather to health than otherwise. I confess, as the tidy waiting maid, with her white apron, rivalling the table cloth in cleanliness, placed the dish before me, I felt so entirely satisfied with my own company, I should not have thanked Prince Albert for his. The room was small, and commanded from its little bow window no more extensive prospect than the green street door of an opposite neighbour: the ruins of Bolton Abbey, in half a dozen different phases, and a few pictorial efforts of native talent, adorned the walls. Whether like *Dick Tinto*, in Scott, the village artist had run up a score at the Bear and Swan, and painted himself out of debt I cannot say; but he certainly had done a great deal for mine host and immortality: there was a dead hare, and a live woodcock, with other attempts, but eminent above all was a portrait of an old toper of the village, with a pipe in his hand, and upon whose face the painter had fastened a perpetual broad grin: this "counterfeit resemblance" alone was quite company enough for me, for look up when I would from my plate he kept giggling down from his frame upon me.

"What do you drink, Sir?" inquired the maid of the Bear and Swan. I paused, but was about to say water, when she interposing, observed, "Our home-brew is 'counted good, Sir."

It is curious how man allows himself to be led by suggestions, as in the case of the mutton so in the matter of the beer, I suffered myself to be influenced by my smart little attendant. When others are willing to cater for me I see no use in taking the trouble for myself. Half the charm of taking mine ease in mine own inn, especially in the country, consists in the simplicity of fare precluding the perplexity of choice. Besides, contrary to the habit of a larger portion of the world, I have the fullest confidence in the fraternity of hosts, and the sisterhood of hostesses, and in indifferent matters of this kind I always defer to their greater experience; though I know at times it has been the practice of various persons to call them hard names—Horace could find no softer term for one of the class than a “perfidus Caupo;” and Martin Luther (who ought to have known better) manufactures anything but a complimentary simile from the craft: writing in 1534 to some persons who had been annoyed for adhering to the confessions of Augsburg, the old Reformer said, “The Devil is the host, and the world is his inn, so that wherever you go you are sure to meet with this ugly host.” Were I an innkeeper this insult alone would make me forswear Lutheranism.

The mutton removed, the maid of the Bear and Swan placed a plum pudding before me. “This was not in the contract,” said I, as the savoury steam rose up in rapid whirls and shaded for a moment the grinning toper on the opposite wall from my eyes.

“Sir.”

“I don’t think I shall eat any.”

“Sir,” said the maid of the Bear and Swan, placing my plate, “Mrs. Weeks is celebrated for her plum puddings.”

“Then,” replied I, again consenting, “I for one shall not be said to slight her reputation.”

As the remains of the plum pudding went out, a tall, portly gentleman came in. He had seen me, he said, (with a bow) in church, and if I purposed waiting for

the afternoon service he should be happy to see me again, and to a cup of Souchong afterwards. "I am a past churchwarden," he added.

It will only make half an hour's difference thought I, aloud; and John Bunyan is a good walker.

"And it is a moonlight night," said the past churchwarden.

This decided the matter, and I accepted his Souchong.

Messrs. Light & Ridler having remitted us (Ed. B. T.) a guinea, left at their Library by a lady for the Church-Goer, as "a trifle towards the purchase of John Bunyan," we handed over the same to our venerable correspondent, who, however, instructed us to return the money, and publish the following note:—

"The Church-Goer presents his compliments to Mrs. C——, and begs she will not feel offended at his having instructed the Editor of the *Times* to return the money through the same channel through which it has reached him. The 'Church-Goer' thoroughly appreciates the very kind motive of Mrs. C.; but as the cob is already purchased and paid for, he can receive no further gratuity; he, therefore, begs Mrs. C. will accept his warmest thanks, and her guinea back again."

Keynsham.

I was in the act of placing a little Worcester sauce on my chop on Saturday morning last, when the *Bristol Times* was laid on the breakfast table by my landlady, who (kind soul) is so solicitous about my minutest comforts that for the most part she will allow nobody else to wait upon me but herself. The first thing I turned to was of course my own composition, and do you know I was quite frightened at the first glimpse to see the space over which it spread—almost two columns! Reader, I sincerely beg your pardon for the infliction—this was certainly imposing on your good nature: I cannot palliate the offence, I can only promise it shall not occur again. I cannot even now account for the length to which it extended, but I suppose it arose from the overwheening notions we all have of our own compositions, and the reluctance we feel to draw our pen through anything we have written.

It was, therefore, with a sincere resolution to cultivate the virtue of brevity I placed my left foot in the stirrup-iron, and slowly extended my right leg over John Bunyan's saddle, on the following Sunday.

Most persons visiting Keynsham would have taken eighteen pence in their pocket, and a place in a second-class carriage. But I was born before an inch of "permanent way" was laid down, and when I can get the turnpike road, with leafy hedges and green fields on both sides of me, I have no wish to be shot through dark tunnels like a pea through a pea-shooter. My time is not so precious that I cannot afford to loiter an additional hour on the way; nor is it a loss either, for

you generally meet, or rather *met*, with some conversi-ble creature in a stage-coach, from whom you departed a trifle wiser, it might be on Mangel Worzel, or it might be on the Elgin Marbles. Now you have time to pick up nothing in a railroad carriage but a heart complaint: you get in, and look around you for a colloquial face in an absolute company, and if you are fortunate enough to find one amongst persons who appear all cast-iron, like the permanent way beneath them, you clear your throat, you give a preliminary cough or two, and you have just time to make a remark on the salubrity of the season, when the train stops, the door is unlocked by a man in Lincoln-green, who shouts "Who's for Nailsea," or "Nottingham," as the case may be, and your *vis-a-vis* alights, and your gossip is nipt in the bud.

The road to Keynsham, though pleasant, fortunately for the reader presents little to reflect upon. "Old gentleman," said I to myself, "no more meditations on the mountains—it is this kind of rumination that runs out to two columns, and as sure as you continue people will call you an old proser, and you will be very generally and very justly voted a bore: leave the blue hills in the horizon, and the little laughing brooks to run rippling and sparkling on without sitting down to moralize like a melancholy Jacques beside them: a sensible man surrenders such things to the poets: mountains to his eye are accumulations of earth, and rocks, and wooded vales simply trees and acres—

‘ The cowslip on the river’s brim
A yellow cowslip is to him,
And it is nothing more.’ ”

The only incident of the road which merits a special record is, perhaps, the fact of John Bunyan having been frightened by the up-train, just at that point where the railway approaches the turnpike close to Keynsham. I was balancing myself in the saddle, repeating part of Keble's "Christian year," while John with his regular foot-fall, kept time to the cadence of the verse, when "whirr!"—out from the side of the

hill shot the bright copper boiler with its train of polished carriages, like a monstrous tea-kettle eloping with a string of monstrous tea-caddies. John snorted and elevated his tail a little, and then pausing as if deliberating whether he ought to expend any of his energies on a start; but he took the more sensible course and stood still, though I could perceive he was greatly alarmed. It was evidently the first time he had seen a railroad, and I thought I would endeavour to convince him of the unreasonableness of his fears; so turning his head in the direction of the still retreating train, and patting him encouragingly on the neck, I told him it was a locomotive engine—an invention of modern science for superseding his species; that it made a great deal of noise, but contrary to the adage did a great deal of work also. He seemed reassured, and by the time we entered the Lamb and Lark had completely recovered his equanimity.

As I entered the church-yard the bells had only begun their work, so I betook me for a short time to "meditations amongst the tombs." Picking my steps over bunches of dock-leaves, nettles, and fern, and the little mounds beneath which the "rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep," I perched myself on the headstone of some estimable defunct who lies at the east end of the burial ground, and who departed this life, according to the stone-cutter, sincerely regretted by his family especially, and the parish of Keynsham generally. I was trying to get off by rote the ambitious epitaph of a poetical chandler who reposed nearly opposite, when my attention was attracted by two very antiquated crones, who came hobbling towards me over the graves which, in the course of nature, they ought to have long since filled; both had apparently attained to four score years, and one was considerably taller than the other, and as she bent over her crooked stick, reminded me of the penny portrait of "Mother Hubbard:" her companion was a little crabbed-faced old creature, and carried a large gingham umbrella that seemed as if it

had been made in the time of the Norman Conquest, if not for Noah. They made their way with pain and difficulty to nearly the spot where I sat, when the taller of the two, turning aside the long rank grass with her stick, pointed out a little rudely placed row of stones to her fellow-crone. "Here," said she, in a voice faltering with age, and wiping her old eyes with a large snuffy brown cotton handkerchief, "is where my baby (poor dear!) lies. I placed these stones myself, and Mr. ——— grumbled a good'un."

"Poor dear!" croaked her companion, moving a few steps nearer the church and pointing with her umbrella to a little green mound, "and here's where my little da-ar-ling is buried."

Good gracious, thought I, and could these sapless old creatures, with half an inch of hair on their upper lips, and looking as hard as walking mummies, have ever been young mothers with blue-eyed babies at their breasts! I shut my eyes to try if I could picture either to my fancy as a fresh, soft-looking young woman; but their old quivering voices, which seemed to me as if two of the last generation had arisen to have a gossip among the headstones, kept off the illusion: the very babies of whom they spoke, and whom they recollected with a tenderness that age hardly impaired, had they lived would have been grandfathers or grandmothers at that moment. Yet such had, of course, been the case: these old crones, with their horny eyes and their hard features, had, no doubt, their day of rustic attraction, when they

"Danced with the lads of the village,
No cheeks glowed more ruddy than theirs!"

Though now they may be sent to point a warning moral to vain beauty's "chamber," and "tell her though she should paint an inch thick, to this complexion must she come at last." The old women hobbled back again towards the church, wiping their eyes with their brown pocket handkerchiefs, and sighing their vain regrets for babies buried sixty years ago.

A few persons were standing listlessly by the porch, and just as I came up a gentleman about five or six and thirty years old, and to all appearances a clergyman, passed by them into the church. I should have put him down for *the* clergyman, only that no one noticed him—no one put their hands to their hats, or saluted or bowed to him, or paid him any of those respectful little recognitions which almost invariably pass between a church pastor and his parishioners. This hurt me; for I began to think, if it was the clergyman, vicar or curate, there did not exist that hearty, cheerful, cordial, family feeling which should be found in every English parish between the minister and his flock. Again I thought, perhaps he may be a stranger—a clergyman brought over from Bath for the day; and even this thought carried little consolation with it. Half the beauty of the English parochial system consists in its pastoral character—in a clergyman being at once the spiritual head and guide, friend and teacher of his parishioners, amongst whom he should live and move and interest himself, as if it were his own family; but this, strangers, who come like shadows and so depart, cannot be expected to be. We will suppose a number of unemployed or invalid clergymen in Bath, having no regular duty, but lying about on the “Guinea Coast,” as an old reverend friend of mine used to say; and one of them gets a note on the previous Saturday from the Rev. Mr. Blank, of some neighbouring parish, requesting that he would do his (Mr. B.’s) duty for him on the following day. So he takes out of his desk some old sermon, which has seen service on forty similar occasions before, and rolling a soiled gown in an old newspaper, takes the railroad, perhaps, and arrives at a strange church just as the bell is about to cease; preaches his sermon to people he never saw before and may never see again, and pocketing it and his guinea departs once more as soon as the “duty” is done. Now, this is a cold, heartless, matter-of-business sort of thing which I do not like.

The clergyman of a large parish ought to make it a point either never to be absent or to keep a curate, not to leave his flock to such uncertain and occasional aid. Indeed, in every case a clergyman with a large and lucrative parish ought to keep a curate; for this having a chance man to fill up a gap, and preach to people whose habits and characters he knows nothing about, is a bad plan.

Keynsham is a large church, consisting of nave, north and south aisle, and chancel, and was originally, viewed as a parish church, a fine structure; but now it presents, in the interior at least, a miserably dilapidated appearance.

The first object that struck me on entering was the parish fire-engine, with other anti-*phlogistic* material, conspicuously placed in the north aisle; from all I saw it could not have been kept there to cool the fervour, by playing on the persons, of the incumbent and his flock, and for all other purposes the parish I think might have more properly provided a shed for such lumber outside the sanctuary. When a fire occurs (and I dare say such things do occur sometimes in Keynsham), I cannot reconcile to my ideas of the reverential awe which should invest the house of God at all times, the circumstance of a number of fellows breaking in, with the noise of hobnailed shoes and loud voices, on the midnight solemnity and silence of such a place, and dragging with shouts an uncouth looking fire-engine from out its sacred portals.

There was no person that I could see to show me into a seat; but to obviate the necessity for a sextoness there seemed to be locks upon none of the pews, and even hinges did not appear to be a very abundant article in use: from some remnants of white paint which I saw about, I conjecture the church underwent that process some half century ago, but several deal boards had since been added in quite a state of nature: a few private pews were lined with green baize, but the rest were for the most part dilapidated and dusty: the

once handsome and elaborately carved oak ceilings of the north and south aisles were in a state of decay; where the panelling had fallen out, in some places common deal had been substituted, but in others the "carved work" had fallen down so fast, that they had seemingly grown tired of filling up the gaps: an unsightly stove chimney traversed two or three of the windows of the north aisle in a diagonal direction, and the frayed and faded glory of the pulpit fringe and cushions, accorded with all around. Even the books in the reading-desk shared in the general dilapidation—the Bible could not be said to have two whole covers, and the Book of Common Prayer seemed devotedly determined to share its fate. In fact, every thing spoke of ruinous neglect; and my own feelings, as I looked round on the signs of indifference and decay, and the scanty and scattered attendance, and witnessed the feebly and coldly performed service, were melancholy and dispiriting in the extreme.

Now, though I am as great an admirer as most people of architectural propriety and order, yet, knowing that these things are in a great measure matters of taste, for mere informality or impurity of style or offences against the recognised laws of ecclesiastical arrangement, I should not think of finding fault with or censuring any one; but for ruin, neglect, and uncleanness there is no excuse. I am sorry to be compelled to speak my mind, but I must say that when I see the appearance of carelessness in the sacred edifice, I have but a poor opinion of the affairs of the parish: you cannot help thinking that as the church is, so the parishioners are, and that if the condition of the one be allowed to grow bad, the state of the other cannot be a matter of extreme anxiety. I must say myself that were I the clergyman of a large and wealthy parish like Keynsham, sooner than not have my church in a suitable state—in a state becoming the solemn purpose to which it was consecrated, I would ask for a rate every month until it was granted; or if my im-

portunity did not succeed, I would go about with a bag, and beg from door to door for the means of keeping it in repair, and you may rest assured no parishioners would be found to resist long the intent and zealous anxiety of any clergyman: where there is a hearty will you may depend upon it success will not be long wanting. If there were none else to keep the church clean, I should make my own servants do it.

I don't know the census of Keynsham, but it is I believe both a large and populous parish; the congregation, however, was miserable: there were a few respectable families of the immediate neighbourhood, and a few poor men, most of them seemingly from the Union Workhouse. I'm told that the place swarms with dissenters, and sooth to say I am not much surprised. The humble population of every parish require pains to be taken to keep them in the church: they must be visited, they must be looked after, cheered and encouraged, or they will soon be snapped up by active schismatics. It is not enough for a clergyman to rise from his breakfast table each Sunday morning, and proceed with a sermon in his pocket to the parish church, and return again in the afternoon to go through the same course, and see no more of his parishioners until the next Sabbath: to employ the words of the commandment with all reverence I should say, "Six days shalt thou labour," as well as the seventh, and your duty ought to draw you almost as imperatively to the interior of the cottage as to the interior of the church. This may be irksome and unpleasant to some people, but the man who is not prepared to postpone his personal convenience, pleasures, and even comforts, to his duty, is unfit for the awful responsibility of his post. It is not for ease or income we go, or at least ought to go, into the church—it is a stewardship from Heaven for which we will have to account.

The whole service was performed and sermon preached by the clergyman whom I saw enter, I should therefore conclude the vicar keeps no curate. Whether

he be by his unaided exertions able to do full and faithful justice to all the duties of his sacred office, is a question for his own mind and judgment—whether he can without help visit his poor every week, superintend his schools, and attend to all the incidental and parochial exigencies. Any clergyman who finds he is not equal to this of himself ought to have help.

There is no organ, the choir consisting of a double bass, two wind instruments, and the children of the Charity Schools.

The sermon was from James v. 16, "The fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." There was no fault to be found with it; it was a very fair and sound discourse; though I thought the seeming lassitude with which the preacher got through the service at the reading desk hardly accorded with the earnestness which he inculcated from the pulpit. There is a legend touching Ignatius Loyola (the founder of the Jesuits), that his zeal and devotion transported him so, that at his prayers he had been seen to be raised from the ground for some considerable time together—a miraculous elevation I should say, not at all likely to occur in our case from the fervour created on the occasion.

The church is dedicated to St. John, and must have had at one time a fine and imposing interior. I have already shown that it is not at present what it ought to be. Not far from the site of the present building, which is of subsequent erection, stood a Monastery of Black Canons, who did not however survive the monarch of six wives' memory; and I believe a crop of Swedish turnips now flourish on the site of the ancient cloisters.

There are a good many monuments in the Church, and several plainly lettered mural brasses; but the family of Bridges, who anciently held the manor, have the lion's share of the wall to themselves. That on the South side of the Church, to "Mrs. Philip Bridges, wife of Edward Bridges, Esq.," is the oddest: besides

a good cut of prose she has ten lines of poetry also to her share, the first two of which are—

“ Here under lyeth, but lives above,
A female Joseph in her husband's love.”

The meaning of this I am unable to penetrate ; unless she ran away from Potiphar's wife or her own husband, I cannot see the analogy.

I think I recollect a blue wand with gilt top, but it would be hazardous to charge my memory, with the Churchwarden. A country Churchwarden is, however, after all only three-eighths of a Churchwarden ; he knows nothing of eating and drinking unless by tradition ; he may have heard of the mighty men of select vestries and sublime appetites in the city—he may have read, and endeavoured to form some idea, of their dinners : and vague visions of turtle soup and turbot may have crossed his mind at a mazy distance, but this is all. Easter and sealing feeds can be to him, unsophisticated man ! at most but matters of history, such as the building of Rome and the siege of Troy, the Archdeacon's charge and the visitation dish of stewed beef being the most salient points in his parish experience.

Keynsham, since the coaches gave up running, would do for the place of the Seven Sleepers. It is remarkable for nothing, perhaps, but the number of Cornua Ammonis, or serpent stones, with which the people have decorated the fronts of their houses, and which are found in great abundance in the quarries round about. Philosophers have one way of accounting for these curious petrefactions, and popular tradition another, which I prefer as being more picturesque : the story is, that a very fair and pious daughter of a Prince of Wales, who rejecting the offers of all who sought her hand, and determined to live in celibacy in some outlandish place, was so charmed with a particularly unpleasant and dismal wood that covered the parish of Keynsham, that she sought permission from the king of the country to live there, which he replied she was

very welcome to do, but that there were such an abundance of snakes and reptiles he feared they would make a meal of her ; the dauntless young lady, however, nothing deterred, thought she would be more than a match for them, which she forthwith proved herself to be, by turning them all into stones, and hence the *Cornua Ammonis*, or snake stone. But this I fear, like Mrs. Philip Bridges and the "female Joseph," is only a female version of St. Patrick's story, with this trifling difference, that the Irish miracle-maker prevailed on the snakes to

" Commit suicide,
To save themselves from slaughter,"

by jumping into the sea, and Mistress Keyna (hence Keynsham) "potted" the reptiles (as Lord Dudley and Ward would say) "for Posterity," by turning them into paving stones.

A Chapter out of place, but a Word in season.

My good reader, sit down and join me in railing at all Newspaper Editors in general, and the Editor of the *Bristol Times* in particular. Last week, when I walked into his office as usual, with my "Church" in my hand, legibly written and pinned at the corners to keep the sheets together, I found him sedulously engaged in preparing to "enlighten the public" with a pot of paste and a pair of scissors: he had a number of long slips of paper before him, to which he was transferring a multitude of small square paragraphs, carefully culled from a heap of his contemporaries which lay mutilated and reticulated by the table at which he sat.

"Still at work, Mr. Editor," said I, taking a seat opposite him, "posterity will be indebted to you for a large amount of paste and paper, to say nothing of scissors worn out in their service, which I sincerely trust they will repay you in that sterling coin stamped with the head of Fame."

"Yes," said he drily, and glancing at the paper in my hand he continued, "I'm afraid we can't find room for you this week."

"Not find room for me after having gone to the trouble of writing twenty-five pages," said I, in something like a tone of hurt pride if not indignant surprise.

"Why," said he, "we can't get more in than our paper will hold: and there are the Clergy and Glo'ster feasts this week, and the consecration of Christ Church, Clifton, and a medical meeting, all to be reported, and of importance, too," he added, cutting and pasting away

as coolly as if he had not mortally wounded my vanity with the last observation.

"So, so," thought I, "'of importance,' and mine I suppose is not." Talk of the apple of a man's eye being sensitive, but there is nothing you can touch to create so keen an anguish as his self-love: what mortal is there that does not think well of his own compositions, and the Church-Goer is no more than mortal, though he wears a snuff-brown coat? Here was I, fancying that the only part of the paper read, or deserving of being read, was my column, and that I was fast making this man's fortune for him, coolly told that the *post prandium* orations of a number of country gentlemen and parsons were of importance, plainly implying that my elaborations were not. A kind of cold consciousness began to creep over me. Can it be possible, thought I, that stuffed with praise and pheasants I have been all this time overrating myself, and that the address of a Gloucestershire man, who has dined on stewed beef and vegetable marrow, is more looked to than my peregrinations?

"Oh, very well," said I aloud, stricken and humbled by the discovery, as I folded up my composition, and placed it in the pocket of my brown coat, "I see my papers are not of so much importance to you or your readers as I thought they were, and I shall not therefore trespass again on your valuable time and space."

The Editor laid down his paste-brush, and looking up in my face very good temperedly said, "Don't be foolish: your papers are very well in their way, and when our space is not occupied with more urgent matters, I shall be very happy to insert them, as there are a certain number of old ladies who look for them; but you ought to know just as well as I do, that if you wrote as well as the Archbishop of Canterbury or myself, I must print the reports of such meetings before anything else, and the smallest squire in Gloucestershire thinks his speech in returning thanks for having his health drunk, of more importance than all you or I

will ever write—he'd never forgive me the omission, and what is of vastly greater moment he'd stop the paper—"

"Copy, Sir," shrieked a little fellow with a black face, and a sharp treble, thrusting his head into the sanctum, and cutting the Editor short.

I was just on the point of saying with Don Giovanni in the opera, "So this is your friend, the *Devil*, have the goodness to introduce me," when St. John's clock struck ten, and as I was so far on my way to Clifton, and had nothing else to do, I thought I would walk leisurely up to Christ Church, and look in at the consecration.

Many like myself were bound for the same destination, but though I walked deliberately (for I had not John Bunyan between my legs) I reached Clifton Park before eleven o'clock. "Have you got a ticket, Sir?" inquired a policeman, as I was about to enter the west porch. I told him I had not, for I was not aware a ticket was necessary.

"I'm sorry for it," said the man civilly enough, "for my orders are not to admit any one without a ticket." "And you may rest assured," replied I, "that I have too great a regard for your cloth to ask you to exceed them," and I turned away to wait until my friend James Henry, by the Grace of God Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, made his appearance, as I knew I might effect an entrance under shelter of his lawn sleeves. I make it a point never to fret or chafe at a little rebuff or refusal like this; besides it is usually done at consecration—the church won't contain the whole of the world, therefore you can only admit a part, and of that part those who pay for the edifice are naturally preferred. However, there were an old lady and a newspaper reporter, neither of whom seemed to possess my philosophy, as both protested, if not very angrily very loudly, against what they called the disgrace of keeping the doors shut against the public.

"It's of a piece with every thing else they have done," said the old lady; "the positions in the church have been all regulated by the amount paid, and now the tickets are disposed of on the same principle. It is all very well to keep out common people, but to refuse a gentlewoman!——"

"And not admit the press," added the reporter; "I never heard of such a thing before."

"Very sorry ma'am, very sorry sir," quietly replied the constable from time to time. "I can't help it; those are my orders; if I were told to keep out the Archbishop of Canterbury, I must do it, or be fined a week's pay."

Eleven o'clock, however, struck while they were yet altercating, and the transept doors being thrown open we all entered, including the elderly gentlewoman and the reporter, whose voices I could still hear grumbling until they were borne out of view and hearing by the crowd.

This is an age of affectation, and in nothing perhaps more than in architecture: every body pretends to have an eye for the sublime and beautiful in this. I heard at least a dozen persons discussing point after point of the building on the day of the consecration, and as people never shine so much as in finding fault, the captious of course had the majority. Now, technically I know little or nothing about architecture; I know and feel when a building pleases me, and I was pleased, and greatly pleased, on the whole with the new church: with more money spent on it of course it might have been made more beautiful; for instance, the interior of the nave looks bare and cold for want of the disengaged columns and the recessed mouldings around the windows, which give such richness and finish to those of the chancel: but people must cut their coat according to their cloth, though I question if this was altogether a wise act of economy.

"Pray, Sir, can you tell me," whispered an old lady, as I crushed into a seat by her side in the north

transept, during the reading of the deed of consecration, "Can you tell me who's to have Trinity, Hotwells?"

"Can't say, Ma'am," said I, "for up to the present the Bishop has neglected to consult me."

I saw the old lady did not know well how to receive my answer, and I cared little myself how she took it, for I saw she was one of those gossips who mistake such tittle tattle for religion, and chose the church more for its minister than for itself.

"There is not a pew to be let here," commenced the old lady again after another pause. "I'm told the first ten or twelve pews have given over one hundred pounds each to the church, and a friend of mine, who gave thirty, is half way down the nave."

"Well Ma'am, said I, all cannot have the first pews, and it is only fair the highest sums should have the highest seats."

"Oh certainly, certainly," replied the old lady, who didn't think of disputing any point—"quite delightful I'm sure—so popular; and the poor people I'm told, too, are to be allowed to pay half-a-crown each for their sittings in the aisle—did you hear that?"

"No Ma'am, and I hope it is not true."

"Indeed, dear me," said the old lady again, with the same indisposition to all contradiction; and after another pause, "Did you hear Mr. Taylor was to forbid the consecration to-day?"

Fortunately the service of the day commenced, or I should have been talked out of all propriety and patience by my gabby neighbour, who was one moment repeating the responses with wondrous energy, and the next staring round on the congregation with restless pertinacity, taking occasion at times to inquire of me where they made stained glass, and if I did not think the old church at Clifton would be deserted now.

As I profess to make all my peregrinations rural, Clifton is of course out of my province, and I do not pretend to call this a professional visit. I merely loitered up the hill, and I will confess to my shame,

through no better motive, I fear, than having nothing else to do : but having gone, I hope I shall be pardoned for expressing what I felt while there. To me a new church is always a new pleasure, and the satisfaction was enhanced in the present instance by witnessing so much good taste and such "liberality of mind," as some persons said last week in one of the newspapers, evidenced in the order and arrangement of the building—the large attendance—the serious attention of all present, the mode of conducting the service, the character of the minister—all these were circumstances connected with the object and occasion to excite gratified feeling. Nevertheless, over and above all, the predominant, and I will say, awful fact forced itself upon my mind and attention that Clifton is still without a Poor Man's Church : the rich have been (laudably I will admit) anxious to provide increased accommodation for themselves and their increasing numbers in this favoured locality—the High Church aristocracy and the Evangelical aristocracy have each their churches, but they have both up to the present moment overlooked the spiritual exigencies of their humbler "brothers of the earth ;" there is yet in Clifton no place of Established worship into which the poor man (for there are poor, and a great many, too, in Clifton) may walk without the danger of being obliged to leave for want of accommodation, and through cold neglect. Of course I am not absurd enough to say that the souls within broad cloth and brocaded silks are not as precious as those which the fustian jacket and the coarse stuff enclose ; but still, however well the rich attend to their own interests in the first instance, it does not absolve them from their duty to the poor in the second ; and in Clifton, where the rich are so abundant, the poor, in point of church accommodation, seem to come off worse than in any other district. At Clifton old church the nose of the Beadle almost curled at the approach of a poor man : the aristocracy filled the pews, and their "pampered menials" the free seats.

Is the man of rags and wretchedness a whit better off by the erection of a new church? from east to west and north to south in the latter every pew is appropriated; the popularity of the minister has left no place for the poor man—the *gay* gentility have filled the old church, the *grave* gentility have crowded the new; the poor perhaps may be generously permitted to occupy the aisle, but don't, for God's sake, pretend to call this church accommodation—no one else will sit there, and therefore the poor are *tolerated*. If it once became the fashion to occupy the aisle, I suppose that too would be appropriated. When it can be at all avoided, free seats should not be placed in the aisle. I say nothing now about the inconvenience of the arrangement; but the poor man has his pride as well as the rich; and there is many a sensitive nature under an old garment, that instead of feeling a cheerful thankfulness throughout the beautiful service of the day, looks from time to time repiningly and bitterly in at his or her favoured fellow men or women, between whom and the poor riches have set up those carved wooden barriers called pews. It often creates a decent desire, I sincerely believe, in the breasts of the humble to attend prayers, if they are permitted to enter a pew. There is not one of us who must not have frequently noticed the diffidence and appearance of hurt sensibility with which an humble person, who had, perhaps, seen better days, or had a little more pride than his equally poor neighbours, has taken up his place in the aisle, amongst those to whose level he would fain fancy himself not yet quite reduced. I do not say that we are bound to consult those whims, much less encourage them; but the poor are a strange and capricious class—their very poverty makes them so; and we must hold out some inducement—we must humour them in some degree to keep them in, and attach them to, the church, which ought to be, *par excellence*, as it was intended to be, the "Church of the Poor Man."

I can guess the answer which is now on the lips of

the reader to all I have said, namely—This is all very well for the poor; what would you do with the rich?—you say that the old church is crammed with the aristocracy and their servants, you see that the new is also full of the “favoured of the earth;” if you, therefore import the poor into one or the other, you must turn out the rich, and what will you do with the rich? Now, I want to do nothing with the rich; but I want the rich to do *something* for the poor: the former must go to church, of course, and very glad I am to see them there: but if they are in such numbers as to crowd out their humbler fellow-creatures, they surely are in sufficient numbers to build accommodation for those so crowded out. Let them build another church—there is still another church wanted in Clifton: the superfine cloths and the silks and satins are pretty well provided for—let the fustian jackets and coarse stuffs be now thought of. You that are clad in rich garments, have fared sumptuously in fine buildings; just bestow a thought or two on the crowd of Lazaruses at your gates, and now that you are yourselves supplied, have the justice to recollect the large arrear of crumbs you owe them. You have not to look for “bread in the wilderness to feed so great a multitude;” for where are the means to be expected if they be not to be found amongst the stately lodged and sumptuously faring inhabitants of Clifton? I have read somewhere in some Eastern Travels, of a tradition which obtains amongst the Jews who still remain in the Holy City, and which I think might be significantly applied to some of the church-building bodies and societies of the present day: these poor remnants of a chosen people say that during the building of the Temple a cloud rested over it, so as to prevent any entrance; and Solomon stood at the door and prayed that the cloud might be removed, and promised that the Temple should always be open to every nation desirous of offering up their prayers; whereupon the lord removed the cloud, and promised that the prayers of all people offered up

in that place should find acceptance in his sight. The tradition conveys at least a beautiful moral, and proves that the ancient people of God were of opinion that the best way of propitiating the Almighty was to throw open the doors of His Temple to all.

Dear reader, what has become all this time of our "Rural Ride?"—I say *our*, for though John Bunyan does not carry double, I always take you in imagination with me in my peregrinations. The truth is, I find I have been loitering so long about Clifton I have no time, or what is more important, the Editor has no room for my "ride," and he says I must postpone it to another Saturday; and I do not regret his decision, as I think I have trespassed quite enough on you for the present. Besides, as John Bunyan has got a corn I may be obliged to give him rest for a week or two; so that I trust you will excuse me for once again—and only once—appearing before you in my old pedestrian character, as the Church-goer dismounted.

TO MY CORRESPONDENTS.

I grow a great man you see, for like Solomon in *The Stranger*, I have letters from all quarters, though like those of the old Steward, some of them do not involve a more important point than "the turning of an old waistcoat:"—still I have letters, and letters beget pride, and the writers will have to blame themselves if they turn my silly head with praise. Well, I won't be spoilt if I can help it; it is too late in life for me to grow vain, and I see nothing in my desultory tattle to be vain of: still I should advise my friends not to tempt a weak old man with too much compliment. I should be sorry to turn a fool in the evening of my life, and a fool I shall certainly prove if I begin to fancy myself any thing better than what I hope I am—

a harmless old gossip. Therefore, no more complimentary letters if you please—I shan't receive them; notes accompanying game are not, however, included under this prohibition. To the "Gloucestershire Farmer" I am much obliged, though the Editor of the *Bristol Times* ate the birds.*

TO THE CHUCH-GOER.

DEAR AND VENERABLE SIR,—You can scarcely imagine the disappointment I felt on Saturday last, when I took up the *Times* newspaper, I found your equestrian portrait *missing*. Do not mistake me, my dear Sir, I mean absent from your original corner. I confess, however, I have had some serious misgivings of late with respect to you, for you have spoken in such rapturous and glowing terms of the dark, black, and sparkling eyes, long ringlets, and neat clean white aprons of the fair damsels whom you and John Bunyan have chanced to encounter on your various peregrinations, that I am half-inclined to think you are little better than the rest of your deceitful gender, and that you are not really the sedate, quiet, and sober old gentleman I fondly cherished the idea you were. You are, doubtless, aware, (for I do yet believe that you are full of gentle sympathies) how closely allied esteem and regard are to the tenderer passions, and therefore, when I found you and John Bunyan had not taken your usual peregrination on the previous Sunday, I feared that your visit to the cold and damp church at Keynsham had produced an aggravation of that distressing malady, the gout, to which you informed us you were in some degree subject. Now, my dear Sir, on this point, I sensibly and feelingly sympathize with you, for I am a martyr to the rheumatism, and I have

* We ate the pheasants certainly, but not without the permission of our venerable friend.—E.B.T.

heard the gout is only one screw more. Do, therefore, pray take care of your venerable person.

I wish I could enjoy a *tete-a-tete* with you in the easy chair which stands invitingly unoccupied before me. There is a nice well-stuffed cushion of my own work, (for I never like to be idle), for you to put your gouty foot upon, as well as one at the back on which to rest your head, the latter, as well as the elbows, is covered over with some of my own netting after the newest fashion; I must confess there is a stitch or two let down here and there, but this is pardonable at my time of life, for in the evening the stitches sometimes appear double.

By the way, do request the Editor of the *Times* always to print your peregrinations in clear type, it is so much more easy to read.

I hope I shall see you in your usual position next Saturday, and thus be convinced that you are in good health.

Your's, with much esteem,

DOROTHY DWIGHT.

Rose Cottage, Primrose-Hill.

N.B.—You will know the house—door painted green, bright brass knocker: the steps are always primly marked out in diamonds with white stone. There is a scraper and two mats. I forgot to mention that behind the house there is a small stable, therefore if a ride be more agreeable, come on John Bunyan.—Have you ever enquired whether John will go in harness, because then two may be company at the same expense. If you are at all asthmatic, I don't object to the smell of cigars.

P.S.—Let me know by note the time of your visit, and I shall have a pair of slippers (worked especially for your feet) airing before the fire.

WINTERBOURNE.

TOM PAINE says somewhere something to the effect, that "laws are like turnpike-gates—the highway of life was free enough before their enactment, but then came cunning and chicane to set up their artificial barriers to make one pay toll at every turn." Loving reader, do not be alarmed for my principles, I have not read the graceless Republican for twenty years; but when I was a young man his works were making a noise in the world, and I turned over one or two of them through mere curiosity: I have not, however, placed my eyes on a page of his for many years, nor should I have thought of him now, had not the toll-bar at the "Blackbird's" evoked the long-dormant passage to my recollection. But, whatever Tom Paine's ideas on the subject might be, John Bunyan's are decidedly of a character quite orthodox: he has a respect for turnpikes, and would as soon think of levanting from a livery stable before his oat bill had been liquidated, as of passing a toll-house if the pike had not been paid. On reaching a gate he will pull up of his own accord, as much as to say "We must not cheat the Trust," and appears altogether so intelligent on the point that although of course, he does not ask for a *ticket*, I have been induced at times to fancy that he must *think* of it. Indeed, if ever a horse had politics, John (albeit his namesake, I believe, was not) must be a Conservative: he has an innate respect for constituted authority, and if there's a *Crown Inn* in the village he turns to it. His very sturdiness seems the result of principle, and I

sometimes think he is slow not so much from choice as contempt of the go-a-head habits of modern times and horses.

John Bunyan paused at the Blackbird's Gate, and taking the hint and three halfpence from my trowser's pocket I paid the man in full of all demands, and requested a ticket in return. "You needn't mind it, Sir, I shall know you again," said the man.

"My good man," said I, "I find the world in general so treacherous of memory in all money matters that I prefer, as the law contemplated, having a voucher for my payments. Besides, you must have a much keener eye for physiognomy than I can easily give you credit for, to be able to recollect every face and form that pass in the twenty-four hours. I for one should be very sorry to give you the trouble of bearing me in mind until my return, since by taking a ticket I may save you any such effort of memory."

"Trouble!" repeated the man, with an impudent familiarity which made my blood boil. "La' bless thee saul, no trouble in life, I'd a know thee again in half a centry if I never saw'd thee in the mean time. Trouble, bless thee! Why, man and boy, I've been at this gate for twenty years, and I never know'd the likes of thee go by before, and if I was to sit for twenty year I'd never set my eyes I 'spect on sech another.— Trouble, bless thee! thee'rt too remarkable an auld chap to forget soon, 'tis only once in a centry sech a rum 'os and rider pass the Blackbird's."

"And I hope," said I indignantly, "'tis only once in a century I shall have the misfortune to meet with such an impudent fellow at the receipt of custom."

I had hardly gone a half-dozen yards, when a gentleman in black, on a bay horse, came trotting up, and having paid the pike was about to pass me, when suddenly looking down at John Bunyan's legs he said, "Are you aware your horse has picked up a stone, Sir." I certainly felt John a little lame for the last few steps, but knowing no other cause I attributed it to the

corn. Thanking the stranger I dismounted, and remedied the matter, and this little roadside courtesy having served, as it were, for a mutual introduction, we continued our way in company, our conversation taking of course an atmospheric turn.

My companion wore a black coat, as I said, and a white neckcloth, the presumption therefore was, he must be a parson—a well-mounted parson. But then he might also be a medical man, or a man in mourning. At that moment, however, as if to relieve my doubts, the corner of a quire of post paper, stitched in a blank wrapper, protuded from his coat pocket.

I determined to make a bold stroke. "You'll lose your sermon, Sir," said I.

He put his hand hastily behind, and coloured slightly. A random shot, thought I, and yet a true one.

"One good turn deserves another," said I. "You saved my horse a lameness, I saved your flock the loss of a sermon."

"It may appear strange," said my new friend, "but I do not think the loss of a sermon such a serious deprivation to a congregation as your remark would seem to imply. I don't think it would be any harm, if half the sermons that are made were dropt (as mine was near being) on the road before ever they were preached, and never found, if it could only make people attend more attentively and devoutly to the beautiful and piety-breathing prayers of the Church."

"But what's to prevent them attending to the prayers and the sermon too?" said I.

"What's to prevent them! Why their own itching ears and unstable hearts—their love of novelty, their restless, craving curiosity. Could there be greater preventatives than these—can the poor human heart have greater enemies? How many congregations barely *endure* the service that they may hear the sermon? If the prayers only got the attention that the preacher does, how many thousand times more good would they not do? One page of our beautiful liturgy, uttered in

the spirit that God requires, and the Church directs, "with a lowly, penitent, and obedient heart," would fall like refreshing dews on the soul, and leave us in a holier, happier frame of mind than a hundred discourses. The best and most elaborately prepared sermon is to my mind a poor, bald, and meagre composition, compared with the touching beauty and true piety of a single sentence of the Litany."

"But, my good Sir," said I, "if the world gave such prominence to the prayers of the Church, there would be no encouragement for the popular preacher."

"The popular preacher!" repeated my companion with emphatic severity. "The preacher of the populace, do you mean—those ordained incarnations of clerical vanity and assumption, that too often go under that denomination—the men that are mighty with *followers*, who will be drawn to God's house not by the humility of their own hearts, but by the fluent tongues and sounding declamation of *popular* preachers? Why the idolatry of some congregations, who crowd the churches and chapels of *popular* preachers, is palpable and glaring as noon day—they set up an idol in a gown and band, and worship him."

"My dear Sir, you surely would not blame a man whose eloquence has the effect of drawing people to his church—the direction of your argument is to set a merit upon dullness."

"Pardon me, Sir, but this is an unfair inference. There is no man who has a higher respect for true eloquence than I have; but, without pausing to inquire whether the popular preaching of the day comes strictly under this designation, I would say that eloquence in a preacher, unless accompanied with humility of heart—unless it spring alone from the high and holy desire to impart and produce good—is nothing more than human egotism. The oratory of the platform and the pulpit is a different thing: the ambition to achieve a reputation for eloquence in the one is pardonable, in the other it is positively impious; and I'd sooner be the veriest

dullard that ever set a congregation to sleep, than the man who worked for the reputation of a popular preacher; for the clergyman who works for his own *ecclat* is unfaithful to his service."

"Still I confess a weakness in favour of a good sermon," said I.

"So I dare say you do; you wish to be pleased: is a wish to be profitted equally prominent? But what do you think, or what would you think of the clergyman who, invested with an awful responsibility, should aim at the comparatively contemptible end of pleasing *you*? No, no, Sir, the vanity of the pulpit is a fearful vanity, compared with which the vanities of the world are almost harmless: and I sigh, not through envy or any ill-will, when I see or hear of crowds flocking to the church or chapel of a 'popular preacher.' I sigh for the congregation and the minister. The solid, sober religion—the religion that outlives excitement, and is independent of excitement—the religion that is ever equable and temperate, is not that which runs in crowds after the popular preacher, and has no homage for Heaven unless Heaven's minister happens to be a public favorite; a homage, too, by the way, which I should be almost afraid to analyze: I should be afraid of finding that the feelings which ought to go to Heaven went no farther than the pulpit."

"But I still am at a loss to see," said I, taking advantage of a pause which my companion made to draw breath; "I am still at a loss to see how the preacher is to blame for his popularity."

"Perhaps he's rather to be pitied," said my friend. "He must be a man of more than common firmness, a man of more than ordinary mind and solidity of purpose, and strength of character *whom such a congregation will not spoil*; he must be strong indeed in his humility, strong in the impression of the responsibility imposed upon him—strong in the consciousness of his inexorable duty to sacrifice everything to the ministry,

whose brain is not turned by the incense of adulation which a crowded church of shallow and weak hearers offer up to him. And how few popular preachers do we find who triumph over and prove themselves superior to these dangerous influences—how few of them show by their bearing and their manner that inflexibly intent alone on the great business committed to their charge, they are unconscious of the homage paid them—of the way in which they are hunted after. In too many cases I am sorry to say they show by many unquestionable proofs that they are but too well aware of the seductive circumstance—too well aware of their own popularity and influence, as one perceives by the air and evidence of self-complacency and oracular authority which grows upon them. Perhaps they can hardly help it: I have never been tried in this way myself, but if I were I almost fear I should not be proof against such dangerous blandishments: I might be just as much dazzled as those I allude to. God forbid that I should boast of my strength before it has been tested—I will not say that silly admirers could not make a silly minister of me, because I never have had admirers in this sense. Heaven alone can preserve a man's humility to him against such influences. The last thing a man sacrifices to his sacred duty is his self-love. It is for this reason I look upon Bourdaloue's character as so majestic: he that could make his voice heard and terrible above the vices of a lascivious court—he who had the most magnificent monarch and the greatest nobles amongst his hearers—when his eloquence was acknowledged by rich and poor, and the French capital resounded with the praises of his oratory, that man retired from the pulpit in the midst of his triumphs, and humbled himself from the height of his fame to the lowliest offices of visitation and consolation. That was a sacrifice worthy of the best men of the Christian church, and worthy a better church than Bourdaloue's. It is not often you will find a man equal to such a sacrifice—a man to tear himself from

the scene of his celebrity, to descend from that pulpit from which he could read in every rivetted eye and attentive face around, the homage paid to his eloquence, and walk the wards of the prison and the hospital and mortify his own pride by the sick bed-side of obscure wretchedness and sin."

I saw my fellow equestrian was what the world calls a High Churchman; and meanly as he thought of eloquence, possessed much of it naturally himself. I was anxious, too, to find out what sort of a composition that was in his coat-tail pocket: he was a censor of other people's sermons, I was curious to know what kind were his own. I thought I'd try and find out where he was going to preach.

"I think I have the pleasure," said I, "of speaking to the rector of"—

"No where," said he with a smile, "not even a curate; I am, in fact, one of those supernumeraries which there will be, so long as parents make more parsons than the Church can find posts for."

"But you are going to preach now?"

"For Mr. Salter, at Iron Acton; and as my road lies this way," said he, bowing and turning off to the right, "I wish you a good morning."

Mr. Salter, thought I, when my companion was out of sight, is, I suppose, from home; I wonder does he give my friend the supernumerary (as he calls himself,) a guinea for his sermon. An easy way of earning twenty-one shillings has your clergyman unattached; for one sermon will answer for twenty places if he would not, indeed, do as I saw a singular and very original-minded clergyman of Bristol once do. He was asked to preach in a neighbouring parish (St. Augustine's, in fact), and I happened to be one of the congregation at the time, when to my surprise—and I will confess amusement also—he preached an article from the last *Quarterly*! He prefixed a text, it is true, and with this slight addition the essay became a sermon; and a very peculiar sermon it made, for it

was all about spinning-jennies.* But if a clergyman has to preach twice or three times a day, he may be pardoned for borrowing, begging, or stealing; for it is out of the question that he can write them all. If a man be sure of different congregations, then he may make the same sermon serve each, as the vicar (now dead) of a large parish in Bristol used to do: he had two or three churches and a chaplaincy, and at each (being a most hard-working and zealous man,) he used to preach, if possible, once on the Sabbath, so managing his sermons that by shifting them a little he made a few go far. He used, however, make a mistake in his count sometimes, and it has more than once occurred that he has preached the same discourse twice in four Sundays to the same congregation; for on a particular occasion I recollect an old vestryman saying to me as we left the church, "This is twice we have had death in the pot this month," alluding to the miracle of Elisha, on which the worthy old vicar had just preached. To prevent too close recurrences, and for the purpose of saving their own stock, some incumbents are in the habit of pressing into their pulpits every strange clergyman who happens to visit their parish, or any body in the parish—a peculiarity my friend the Rev. James T-yl-r displays at Clifton, I am told, to such an extent that any body who walks out with a white neckcloth and a black coat runs the risk of being asked, with a bland bow, to "do duty next Sunday." It is said (but I won't answer for the truth of the story,) that two chancery barristers and a doctor of music had the offer of his pulpit in this manner.

On entering Winterbourne I noticed a good many going into a bare-looking Dissenting chapel, with 1829 in immense figures in front; so, as the inscription was in that

* A still cooler act was done by the noted Jack P—lps, (one of a race of parsons now, thank Heaven, almost extinct,) who upon one occasion preached to the congregation of a neighbouring clergyman, the last Visitation Charge of his diocesan, the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

part of the building where the denomination of the sect assembling there is usually placed, I concluded this was number 1829 of the two thousand varieties of dissent. Amongst those going in I noticed several ambitiously-dressed young women, and the Taglionis of their country beaux were certainly a cut above non-conformity.

It was originally my intention to have availed myself of an invitation which, the reader will probably recollect, I received from Winterbourne when I was making a round of the city parishes, offering me hospitality, &c., if I would visit their church. It is true the note was anonymous; but as the churchwarden was the most likely man to have sent it, I determined to ascertain who he was and call on him. There was a comfortable square-built house a little in from the road. "My good man," said I to one of a number who were going in the direction of a lane which led to the church, the bells of which I could hear, "whose house is that?"

"The parsonage," said the man.

"Where is the churchwarden's?"

'Twas at the other end of the village. I was very thirsty after my ride, and in immediate want of a draught of something or another; and as it was so far to go to the churchwarden's, I thought I'd try the rector.

"But," said my modesty, "you don't know the rector; and it is cool to ride up to a man's hall-door and ask for a drink, when you don't know him."

"Yet hospitality," answered my thirst, "was an old duty imposed upon the church and the clergy, and I do not see why the Reformation should do away with one of its best attributes. To be sure the refectory no longer exists, the dole is done away with, and the buttery hatch is only known to antiquarians; still that rectory does not look as if it were altogether unconscious of a barrel of home-brewed, and the gate is invitingly ajar; besides, what's the use of a Doctor of Civil Law if he does not practice civility. What do

you think, John Bunyan?" said I, touching John with my heel, and John decided the point by walking straight up to the gate. A neatly-dressed young woman with a white handkerchief folded in her hand, and her Prayer-book placed formally in that, was coming down the walk from the house.

"Is the rector at home, my good girl," said I.

"No, Sir," said she, making a curtsy, and in a tone of civility that quite emboldened me; "he's gone to church."

"I'm very thirsty," said I, "would you be kind enough to let me have a drink?"

"Certainly, Sir," said she with the utmost alacrity, as if she really felt a pleasure (which I'm sure she did,) in compliance; "if you'll be good enough to come this way."

I fastened John Bunyan's bridle to some rustic paling and followed the young woman to the kitchen, resolving by the way that the rector was the model of a country clergyman to teach his servants such kind civility; for the domestic is ever the reflection of the master.

"Will you have cider, Sir?" said she.

"Thank you, my dear, I'm afraid of cider" said I, recollecting my rheumatism; "have you got any water?"

"Plenty of water, Sir, but you had better have beer; I have got the key," and she took it out of her pocket. This placed the coping-stone on my good opinion: admirable man, thought I, Rector of Winterbourne, thou must be, not only to have such obliging domestics, but when you go to church to considerably think of leaving the key of the beer behind to refresh the way-faring man. I had the beer, and told the young woman to tell Dr. Allen the "Church-Goer" had called; but lest she may not have presented my compliments, I take this public opportunity to thank my yet perhaps all unconscious host for his hospitality. His domestics are well bred, and his beer well brewed.

The bell had not ceased ringing when I reached the church, and the sextoness civilly (for civility seemed the order of the place,) inquired if I wished to be shown into any particular pew. I mentioned the Churchwarden's, and was immediately conducted into a square pew; but the gold-topped wand (gross, unpardonable neglect!) was wanting. In a minute or two that gentleman made his appearance in a pair of primrose gloves, and bowed to me very courteously, and I returned the salutation with all the grace in my power. Though it is still printed in my picture, I did not bring my great Prayer-book with me on this occasion. There were a number, however, both of these and Bibles in the pew, of which my neighbour politely handed me one; on opening it, however, I found it was French. I affect, it is true, a smattering of the tongue; yet as I wished to be able to say my prayers without the aid of a dictionary, I thought I'd try English, so I laid it down and took up another, which proved to be Italian. Italian I knew nothing at all about; so I tried a third, which came up Latin, and, by the way, was flanked with a Greek Bible. This must be a detachment from the Bodleian Library, said I to myself: one would think that the tower of Babel was in the neighbourhood, and that this was the family pew for it—a sort of Polyglott seat, as one might say, where a man might be accommodated in every language but the one he understands. By this time the churchwarden had noticed my embarrassment, and very kindly relieved it by borrowing an English Payer-book for me from the next pew.

Soon after the deposition of Edward the Second the Manor of Winterbourne was granted to one of the early Lords of Bradeston, of Berkeley parish, as a reward for having assisted to rob that ill-fated monarch of his life and kingdom. No sooner had he got possession, than like all the knightly cut-throats of that day, he proceeded to found and endow a chauntry at this church (which is dedicated to St. Michael,) and otherwise enrich the building: under the arch between the

greater and the lesser chancel (the latter, which belongs to the Lord of the Manor, being in fact a continuation of the north aisle) are two recumbent statues, on a rather rude altar tomb, the one a cross-legged Crusader, and the other I suppose his wife, which are generally considered to belong to this family of the Bradestones. I could see no date, but under the head of the male figure is a boar's head collared, with a crown, and at his feet a lion couchant: but it is not worth one's while wasting much time in the research: he was a warrior doubtless in days when men robbed each other by means more direct than the new Bankruptcy Laws, or the Act for the Abolition of Imprisonment for Debt. From the Bradestones the Manor descended to the Bucks, and from the Bucks to the Brownes, and from the Brownes to the Jones's, to whom I believe it belongs now; or if it doesn't, it does to somebody else, who has doubtless a good right to it.

The tower and spire of Winterbourne are justly much admired for their lightness and elegance;* and in other respects it is a fine and creditable specimen of an English parish church. It consists of a nave with north aisle, and chancel: the nave and north aisle have I perceive been lately rebuilt, and in a manner and by means that reflect credit on the parish and all who took part in the work. I can recollect years ago visiting this church, when there were, if I mistake not, a row of cumbrous and unsightly semi-Doric, semi-anything columns dividing the nave from the north aisle: this portion of the edifice was found to be in a dangerous state, so it was rebuilt last spring, and in the renovations the early decorated style is chastely carried out, and the "Dorics" replaced by piers and arches of a suitable character. The heads of the new windows of the north aisle are very pleasingly varied, and the timbers of the oak roofing being exposed to view, give

* The present spire is comparatively new. The old one may be seen stuck up in the garden of some person by the road side near Hambrook.

a subdued and ecclesiastical character to the interior. I noticed a number of new free seats tastefully constructed, being open benches, finished off with the Gothic termination, and carved poppy head. Above a pew in the north aisle I saw the top of a canopied recessed tomb, but on proceeding to take a nearer survey, I found the figure and greater part of the recess boarded up with the back of the seat. The chancel does not seem to have partaken of the late improvements, for it is a barbarous thing, the altar screen being like a huge dresser, painted brown, and picked out with white angels. This, however, I have no doubt will also feel the progress of improvement before long. A number of wooden figures (which are Indian enough in shape to have belonged to the Temple of Vishnu, but had really been removed from the old roof) fantastically arranged like so many guardian angels, or tormenting imps, around the tomb of the Bradestones, though they harmonized with, did not at all enhance the effect of the aforesaid screen. I said that the repairs were creditable to the parish, and the alacrity with which a rate was granted, and that a large one, redounds to the honour of the parishioners, and is a strong proof of the friendly, I had almost said family, feeling which must exist between them and the rector. It is a fine and wholesome sign when men come forward freely at the call of the clergyman and churchwardens to tax themselves for the repairs and restorations of the church. The zealous interest which an incumbent takes in his parish, begets for the most part a corresponding zeal and interest in the people, and the earnest activity of the one is responded to by sympathy and support from the other. I liked, too, the appearance of the attendance at church—it had all the character of a truly English rural congregation: the hale and hearty Gloucestershire farmer, with his wife and fresh-coloured sons and daughters, and a very considerable number of the agricultural labourers forming the staple of a large congregation, there being also as many of the gentry as lived

in the neighbourhood, though in respect of a resident aristocracy I believe the parish is but scantily furnished. All present joined cordially in the services, and the singing, though homely, was hearty, the children of the schools being lustily aided in it by the honest farmers and their wives.

When the Rector entered the pulpit (on ascertaining it was he from my neighbour the churchwarden), I resolved from all I had previously seen (to say nothing of my reception at the Rectory) to be pleased, whatever kind of sermon he might happen to preach. However he did not stand in need of my clemency. He took his text from 1 Kings, xviii., 21—"How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." It was just the sermon for an English rural congregation, plain, practical, and frank; no firing over their heads with forced and fine things unsuited to simple apprehensions; no cumbering the mind with doctrinal difficulties. It was delivered to profit, and not to surprise or perplex, evidencing a double knowledge on the part of the preacher—a knowledge of his subject, and a knowledge of his hearers.

I perceived the offertory was observed, and with one or two exceptions (for I confess I did follow the collectors a little closely with my eye) cheerfully contributed to: two or three ladies, however, did turn away their heads as the little embroidered bag was held over their pew doors, as if Pope Gregory (I believe that's the old gentleman who now presides in the Vactican) were stitched up in it.

After leaving the church the Rector passed me on the road with a buff bag in his hand filled (principally with coppers I should say from the sound): and I confess the cheerful penny offerings of that simple congregation sounded quite as gratefully in my ears, as the jingle of the rich man's guinea.

I have had two communications, one poetry, the other prose, sent me this week, which I have had the Editor's permission to print. They are as follow :—

TO THE CHURCH-GOOER.

Good zur—I bee a zimple country wite—
 I rede a bit, and meake a shift to rite.
 When I wur young I wurnt zend mutch to skool,
 An that's th' razun I be zich a vool :
 But I wur alwiz meade my Church to tend,
 Caze Mothur zed it wood my mannurs mend.
 An zo it did : vor you'll be pleaz'd to hear
 I still on Zundys do at Church appear,
 I love old Mothur Church—indeed I doo—
 An I do love the voke az love her too :
 Zo ye'll nat wonder I've regard vor yoo. }
 I like to rede wat in the “ *Times* ” yoo zay
 About yer trips upon th' Zabbuth day
 Too diffrunt Churches in yer naiborood—
 An I beleve yeel doo a deal o' good.
 But that zays nothin—wat I want too tell
 Iz, that yeel plaze our voke oncommon well,
 If yoo at our rite purty little place
 Zum Zundy, ere 'tis long, wool show yer face.
 Weeve got a vine old Church, and Castel too,
 Wich I be zure ye wood bee glad too vue.
 The poorly hostess az doo kip th' *Swan*
 Will treat you zur jist like a gentelman :
John Bunyin too, athin hur snug warm stabel,
 Of corn may yet as mutch az he bee abel.
 But stop—kind zur, I humbly ax yer pardun—
Praps yeel bee axd to dinnur wi th' Wardun !
 Yeel nat hav, az at *Winterburn*, to goa
 Out ov yer way a haaf a mile or zoa
 Arter th' Wardun's rezedens too zurch,
 Vor yoo wool vind hiz ouze *close by th' Church*.
 Hees a good zort o' man, an I've no dout
 If yee do call yeel get a good “ blow out.”
 Wen ye doo cum, I hope yee wont refuze
 Too gi' us timely notis in th' *nuze*.

I goot our skoolmastur too luck this o'er—
 But I doo thenk 'tis woos an twur afore :
 He put a lot o' dots an grut long strokes,
 Becaze a zed twood zute th' larnid vokes.
 But yeel ixcuze, I knaw, theze simple letter—
 I wood a rit it, if I cood, mutch better.

CALEB CLODPOLL.

Thornbry, Glostursheer.

TO THE CHURCH-GOER.

VENERABLE SIR,—I am sorry you are not as indefatigable in your rustic pilgrimages as you were in your city rounds. When confining your observations to Bristol, you hardly allowed a week to pass without giving the public a paper on some church or another; now you suffer a fortnight to elapse between your contributions, and sometimes rather more. If you continue to extend the intervals of publication at this rate, we may soon say of you as somebody said of Horace, or he says of himself—

“*Sic raro scribis*”—

I dare say you know the rest of the quotation: I hope, at least, you do, for I forget it.

My object, venerable sir, in addressing you now is, to endeavour to incite you to increased activity, that we country parsons may have the pleasure or pain of seeing ourselves a little sooner in letter-press, than we can possibly expect to do, if you take such very long rests between your trips. We want to have our suspense ended—our fate decided; not to be left for twelve months to come in nervous doubt as to whether each Sunday morning may bring the Church-Goer to our venerable old country church or not.

Though I say we, I do not address you for my own sake; for I am only a curate, and I perceive we poor seventy pounders are sufficiently insignificant to escape your notice—*aquilla non petit muscas*. You seldom condescend to criticise or victimize anything below a vicar, and I, therefore, do not presume to expect that I shall either gain or lose by your visit; but I really feel for my worthy old rector, who has not had an easy moment, I verily believe, since he first heard of your intention to take “rural rides,” and read that you had purchased a horse. His feelings are a mixture of nervous hope and fear; he is afraid of your coming, and yet he hardly wishes you to stay away; I really pity the “restless ecstasy” in which he is. He

invariably takes a peep of late into the church from the vestry door before advancing to the reading-desk, to see if there be any suspicious-looking stranger amongst the congregation; and if there should happen to be one who resembles you, either in age or appearance, he is quite in a tremble for that day and the following six, and waits with the greatest anxiety until the next Saturday to see if he is in the paper; or rather he has not the patience to wait, for he will sometimes go to meet the postman, and get the *Times* from him on the road. Returning to the parsonage a few Saturday mornings since, I met him on the bridge, and the first question he asked was, if I saw the postman. At other times, when he does happen to be at breakfast on the arrival of the paper, you should see how the fried potatoes and bacon (my rector is very fond of this dish for breakfast,) are neglected, or rather not remembered at all, for the moment; while with tremulous haste he breaks the wrapper, and turns to the fourth page to see if ours be the "church for the day;" and then you should witness the relief, not unmingled, I sometimes think, with disappointment, which he experiences on finding he is not there: he breathes freely, lays down the paper, and attacks the fried potatoes and bacon. For the last two months, (and this confirms me in my impression, that he is not indisposed to be distinguished,) he has preached invariably in the morning, though he often previously conceded me that privilege, as well as the afternoon also; and his sermons have been freshened up, with an evidently increased ambition. Last Sunday being a wet one, he, I suppose, made sure you would not come, so he left at home the sermon that he had been getting up during the week with the greatest care, in anticipation, or perhaps apprehension, of you, and took with him an old one which he had not preached for twelve months. It turned out, however, that just as he was about to enter the reading-desk, he perceived close by the north side of the chancel arch a

little old-fashioned man (but who, I could plainly see, was not of your diameter by a dozen inches), with spectacles. This apparition quite altered his arrangement: he pocketed the old sermon, and beckoning one of his daughters to him from the rectory pew, sent her home for the new one, which he preached with great spirit, and I hope to the edification of the flock, though the stranger in spectacles turned out, as we ascertained next day, to be a travelling vender of Blacking. I therefore beg you will come at once, and let us know the best or the worst without delay, for the rector's excitement will not pass away until the visit is over. Besides, it is attended with inconvenience not only to himself but to the household: for instance—he has always brewed for the family and the other day he made a mistake in the hops, whereby the beer was so bitter that nobody could drink it; rather an annoyance, you will confess, considering that I reside at the Rectory. Then he runs the risk of making a mistake in the Psalms, by constantly looking towards the door as each person enters, expecting it may be you. Even the family participate in his nervousness, for the other day, after your visit to Keynsham, his three daughters (the parish gossips are kind enough to appropriate the eldest to your humble servant) entered the church with needles and threads innumerable to see if there was the slightest rent in the pulpit fringe, the Churchwarden's pew, or window curtains; and I have actually had a clean washed surplice every second Sunday of late on the strength of it, while the clerk has been enjoined, under penalty of dismissal, to come in a white neckcloth.

Be, therefore, so good as to pay your visit at once, and thereby relieve the anxious suspense of my rector, and

Your humble servant,
THE CURATE OF ———.

To poet and parson I have but one answer to return, I shall be with you all, and eat your dinners, and hear

your sermons in good time. I hope, however, there is no clergyman who does not do his best on all occasions. To take pains with his sermon, merely because the "Church-Goer" is expected, is a poor compliment to his flock, to say nothing of more serious considerations.

Yatton.

THE Editor of the *Bristol Times* has made it a kind of agreement with me, whether I travel on John Bunyan's back, my own feet, or by a railroad, that the "counterfeit resemblance" of my "matchless steed" shall in any and every case surmount the column, to give a character, as he calls it, to my papers. This will account for my equestrian appearance being kept up, though I paid my visit, in the present instance, to Yatton on the "permanent way" of the Bristol and Exeter line. My reasons for departing from my usual mode of pilgrimage were various: my first was, that John was unable to travel—I suppose, loving reader, you will not require another.

"A second-class ticket for Yatton," said I to a young man who was stamping away in the office; but the young man, either not heeding or hearing my request, continued to stamp away with unabated energy, until thinking he might not have marked my words I repeated them, and received in return a rebuke for my hasty tendencies. "You must have patience, Sir," said he. "I have been endeavouring to cultivate that virtue all my life, my good youth," was my reply.

"Yatton," cried the green-clad conductor, throwing open the door of a carriage so marked. "Who's for Yatton?"

"I am," said I, stepping in and taking my seat with a limited family party, a large hand-basket containing something savoury, and a railroad labourer. It is sur-

prising how instinctively and immediately, when thrown within a small compass with any number of persons, one will commence speculating on the quality, degree, and destination of each, as if it could possibly be a matter of interest or importance to him who or what they were, by whom he chanced to sit for an hour or so in a railroad carriage or a stage-coach. It was upon this principle, I suppose, that I began immediately wearying myself with conjectures as to whether the family party meant to have a family pic-nic, or were carrying a ready-cooked dinner to some country acquaintance: nay more, I speculated on the probability of the object in the interior of the basket, which so excited my olfactory sympathies, being a roast fowl, or duck subject to a similar process of cookery. I thought I'd ascertain the point. "The smell of your roast duck," said I to the head of the family party, (a mechanical looking sort of man) "almost gives me an appetite for a second breakfast," and I pointed at the same time to the basket.

"'Tisn't a duck," said the man.

"Then it is a ——"

"Goose," added he, before I could finish my sentence.

I looked at him to see if he meant this literally, or as an equivocal. He was not the cut of one to perpetrate a pun; yet there was something in the way he said it to determine me to make no further attempts to cultivate an acquaintance with the family party; I therefore kept my opinions to myself until we reached the Yatton station, when on descending from the carriage I discovered that my friend, the navigator, (as the public are pleased, through some curious fancy, to call those rough landmen who cut out railway lines,) had alighted also.

I am a very indifferent judge of distances, but I should think it is about half-a-mile or so from the station to Yatton; so seeing my neighbour to all appearances bound on the same destination, I fell into

company and conversation with him. He had on a coarse white flannel blouse and a cap of dressed sheepskin, and in other respects, so far as dress was concerned, differed little from his race, but that his laced boots were not quite as heavy as usual, and were well blackened: he was of a far more intelligent, and I had almost said delicate, countenance than the generality of his rough tribe; for he really had a soft pair of hazel eyes and silken lashes that a lady might envy; and I soon found out that he was, in a moral sense also, a striking exception to the usually besotted and brutalized beings which railroad enterprise has called into a class existence throughout the country. From the sum which he said he earned, over 14s. a-week, I conjectured he was engaged in that description of work which required rather more skill than the usual pick-axe and shovel slavery. He said he was from the part of the country where we then were, but had been working (I think he said) up towards Swindon for some time, and was then coming down to see his mother. I have always taken an interest in this railroad race, which an iron age has produced; I have taken an interest in them for their own sakes, and the sake of society; for while I deplored their moral and religious degradation, I could not help thinking of the dangerous elements and materials of disturbance which British wealth and British speculation were originating over this fair land, to make, perhaps, future and fearful levies for the anarchist and revolutionist when, or even before, the completion of our railroad projects left them comparatively unemployed. There would be no merit to my mind, in society endeavouring to unbrutalize these men, if society, (which it does not, to anything like a proper extent,) endeavoured to do so; for so certainly as we do not endeavour to humanize, so certainly will they one day or another make us feel and deplore our neglect of, them. It was, therefore, with no small pleasure that I saw in my companion something superior to the two-

footed brute which usually toils in tunnels; thanks to the parish school when he was a boy, and the effects of early education, or rather I should almost say association, which led him to a church when within his reach on Sundays since he became a navigator. He had even then, in a bundle with him, the old Prayer-book which he got when a boy at school, together with a Bible, which was one of a number distributed by some considerate person amongst the railroad labourers who attended the temporary wooden church erected through Mr. Close's exertions on the Cheltenham and Gloucester line, when he had been working there. Though there are times when I cannot quite concur with the Perpetual Curate of Cheltenham, this is a fact which redounds to his credit. Society owes every man a debt of gratitude who will take the trouble of socializing and softening down a creature, who in his ignorance and insensibility is its most dangerous member; and there is this additional circumstance in Mr. Close's favour, that when his fashionable admirers followed him from Cheltenham to the log chapel, and not content with shutting out the poor from the parish church, began to crowd out the smock-frocks from their own peculiar place of worship also, he told them, that however glad he was to see his more favoured friends, they had the means and opportunities of religious accommodation elsewhere; and he must therefore request they would leave the poor railroad labourer undivided possession of an edifice erected to his use, who could not command a seat elsewhere.

Pleased to find amongst a class which before I thought the most insensible and embruted body in Great Britain, one who retained his good honest English and Church of England feelings amongst such associates and sad examples around him, we continued to walk together until near Yatton, when my companion, wishing me a good morning, turned up a bye road which he said led to his mother's cottage. He

told me he had not seen her for twelve months, and I can easily contemplate the pleasure of that reunion to both. The mere curiosity which intrudes on the affections or griefs of the poor is, I think, the very worst description of impertinence; if it was not that I felt conscious of this I should have been almost tempted to follow and see the meeting of son and mother. Poets and Romancers have drawn a thousand situations of pleasure; but there is no moment of delicious feeling to equal that when parent and child (if both are what they ought to be) meet after anything like a lengthened separation. For the boy or the man who has never felt this there can be but one apology offered, that he has never gone from home, which it is well worth his while to do, if it were only for the pleasure of returning to it. In the sweet rush of feelings which the peasant experiences on crossing the old threshold after even a year's absence, he not only need not, but does not for the moment envy the squire in the neighbouring hall. Some will talk of the delight with which they first saw from a distance the old church spire again, but they may rest assured that it was the old cottage and its inmates that they could not see, but they knew stood close by, that lent enchantment to and helped to shed such sweet associations around even that hallowed object.

On entering the church-yard, which I did over a wooden stile, from the village, I found, as one generally does in a country parish, a number of rustics loitering about. There was one old fellow, however, seated by the base of the ancient cross, and at the moment engaged in winding up or setting his watch by the village oracle, to whom I applied myself, as being the most conversible son of the soil there.

"Fine morning, measter," said he on seeing me approach; "what be the time by thee?" and he pointed to the bunch of seals which descended from my fob. I told him.

"Dost thee keep rayle-rowad time?" was his next inquiry.

I answered in the negative.

"Ha," said he, with apparent satisfaction, "I be delighted that there's be one as don't go by those run-away ingines. All the village are a-going mad, shoving on their watches ten minutes to be by the rayle, as they say."

Here's an old "worshipper of the rust of antiquity," thought I—one of the fossil remains of the real rustic, who distrusts or despises every thing new. I'll be bound he'd sooner take three hours and travel in his own market-cart to Bristol, than be indebted to Brunel or the "rayle," as he calls it, for taking him there in one-sixth the time.

I asked him the name of his clergyman.

"Our parson?" repeated he, as if he knew him better by that title, "Mr. Clarke; and as worthy a man as ever wore a gown."

"Charitable, I suppose?"

"If he has an enemy I'll eat un," said the rustic, closing his watch in its outer case, and dropping the old-fashioned affair into his fob; "if a man ben't a favourite who visits and helps the poor, edicates their children, and knows and advises all his neighbours, why it would be hard to please us country volk."

"But you have said nothing about his preaching: how do you like him in the pulpit?"

My neighbour scratched his head, and seemed rather brought to a pause by the question. "Whoy," said he, at length, "if thee ask me what kind of a preacher he be, I like a loud preacher—one to make the old church ring agin, like Parson B., a fine speaker that knocks the dust out of our hearts and the ould velvet cushion. Mr. Clarke is a good preacher for some; but I am old and getting hard o' hearing; and he goes so fast I can't always understand him, as it were, you see."

"Well," said I, "I shall hear him to-day, and judge

for myself. This is a fine old church of yours ; do you know when it was built ?”

“I can’t say, measter,” said he ; “I am no scholar, or learned in auncient things ; but I dare say he is a thousand, or mayhap five hundred year old.”

Well, thought I, that is as near as some antiquarians go in their researches.

“There are some ould effigies of a great family of the Newtons, that lived once in these parts,” continued my informant, growing communicative ; “one is a Jidge, and lies on his back on a painted tombstone, with a fine lady by his side, and his two dogs at his feet ; I suppose they were buried with him. But there’s the small bell,” said he, rising, “and the parson does not like us to be late in church.”

The first thing that struck me on entering the south porch was a board conspicuously hung up, on which were the words—“TAKE OFF YOUR PATTERNS,” painted in plain letters, a very necessary injunction in a rural parish, considering the dreadful clatter the iron-shod damsels sometimes make.

All the natives looked at me, but nobody offered me a seat, so I helped myself to the first I saw, and which I occupied in conjunction with an old ploughman and a boy in an ambitious livery coat. A stranger in a retired rural church, especially if he happen to wear spectacles and broadcloth, is an event too remarkable in the annals of the parish to be lightly overlooked, and my friends around me stared at the new comer as if they would have said, “I wonder who you are, and where you come from, and what brings you here.” A man who was standing at the intersection of the transepts, nave, and chancel, and pulling away at the bell-rope, presenting rather a prominent figure in the scene, appeared indeed as if he would almost ask the question ; even the school children, who, headed by the master carrying a music-book in his hand, entered in long file through the south door of the chancel, and who came

pat, pat, clatter in their wooden shoes up the aisle, immediately descried the stranger, and looked over their snub noses at me as if I had two heads. Well, thought I, it would seem as if Yatton was not often favoured with the visits of an illustrious stranger; I must get out of the way as soon as possible after the service, lest the churchwardens be for waiting on me with a deputation to present an address.

As soon as the clergyman entered the reading desk, however, the people turned their eyes from me to their prayer books. The service had hardly commenced when I saw the force of my rustic friend's remark in the churchyard. There is an old joke (which I should ask pardon for repeating, for I fear that it is none of the most reverent) of an Oxford spark saying he would give any man the Creed and beat him before he came to the end of the Litany. I really believe from the rate at which he read, that the incumbent of Yatton might do this with ease: I attempted to keep up with him, but finding the pace impossible I closed my book, and listened with resignation. Now I hope no man is above mending a bad fashion, and from the high character I have heard of the incumbent of Yatton, I sincerely hope and am sure he will not take it amiss for me when I recommend him to read slower. I do not for a moment think he sets a subordinate value on the prayers, or that he thinks the time devoted to their recital thrown away; but I assure him that too rapid a mode of "getting through the service" on the part of the clergyman is calculated to produce indifference on the part of the people, who are already too much inclined to contract a kind of lax and gabbling habit of making the responses. I cannot bear to hear the beautiful prayers of the church, which so abound in fervent appeals, in deep devotional and penitential expressions, and *awful* epithets, being skipped through by clergyman and congregation, as if they were performing a mere daily task, the primary object of which was

expedition. It is told of the Jewish sacred writers (I think by the late Bishop Jebb) that they kept two pens by them, one of which was only used to inscribe the name of God—being consecrated as one might say to the sole inscription of that awful word. It was a happy and a holy idea, from which many of our ministers who (when reading the prayers of the church), do not pause to pronounce the awful name of the Deity with any more deliberation or solemnity than if it were the smallest particle in the language, would do well to take a lesson. Schismatics are often in the habit of saying that the service of the church is dry and unedifying; but if their crude and bald extemporizings could only be read through tamely or trippingly, what miserable, wretched, and senseless stuff they would seem : it is impossible to conceal the beauty of our Liturgy altogether by any kind of reading, but it is nevertheless sad to see it shorn of half its loveliness by levity or listlessness.

While I am in my captious mood I shall endeavour to dispose of all my fault-finding at once: I would, therefore, recommend the minister to rebuke his flock for a practice, which they have in common with most rural congregations, namely of turning their backs to the clergyman when the *Te Deum* and *Jubilate* are being performed and the psalms sung, leaning deliberately on their elbows, and looking up at the organ-loft as if they were listening to the music in front of a fair booth, instead of "singing to the praise and glory of God." The organ is a large, and for a country church, an elaborate instrument. It was once surmounted by three allegorical and musical figures, comprising King David, with gilt harp strings and knee buckles, and two Vicars Choral of Honduras mahogany, whom he is in the act of accompanying; but these have of late, like Darius, "fallen from their high estate," and occupy lower posts full in front of the gallery.

The text was a short and comprehensive one—"The wages of sin is death." The same fault that I find with him in the reading-desk applied to the preacher's manner in the pulpit. His delivery was rapid, irregular, and unequal; and, owing to these causes nothing, but the most careful attention could enable me to comprehend a sermon which was in itself simple, solemn, and unaffected: preached with more deliberation the discourse would have been everything one could wish—a good plain country-church sermon, suited to the education and condition of his audience. And this is not quite so easy a style of composition as many may think: for my part I have heard a dozen "*fine*" sermons to the single plain one of which I could approve; in fact it is a most enviable and rare talent is that of being able to preach a good rural sermon: some people think it merely consists in talking down to the comprehensions of a rude and primitive people, whereas you have to talk up to them—you have to make clearer to them that which is clear—you have to present great truths to them in the most striking and least involved style—you have to quicken dull apprehensions, and to teach solemn things in simple lessons, so that they may leave an impression upon easy natures not always the quickest to receive, or the surest to retain them. An affected preaching down to people's comprehensions is quite another thing: it is often making weaker what was weak before, or making a thing more obscure by attempted elucidation, like the Rev. Robert Montgomery, whom a friend of mine heard when last in London preaching at (I think he calls it) Percy Chapel, from the text—"Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. "I think it necessary to explain for the benefit of my poorer brethren," said the Rev. Robert, "that *then*, is an inferential particle." His "poorer brethren" were doubtless obliged to him for his information, but whether they were anything the wiser for it is another question.

But after all what a man is or does in the pulpit is as nothing comparatively with what he is and does in his parish : and I am told that morning, evening, and mid-day, the incumbent of Yatton may be seen issuing from the picturesque little Gothic Rectory on the south-east side of the churchyard on his errands of instruction, his rounds of visitation, and charity. It is these duties that contribute more than your set Sunday sermons to make a parish moral, and the people of wholesome and healthy habits. The country parson that talks by the ploughman and reaper in the field, and the labourer in the homestead, may do more good than Massillon could with all his eloquence.

Yatton is amongst the best of the many beautiful churches that abound in this part of Somersetshire. It is, I believe, what is sometimes called a quarter-cathedral, and is a prebend to Wells : it is cruciform in its design, with a square tower springing up at the intersection of the aisles : the south porch is a good specimen, and the west end would reward an attentive examination, if it were not that the eye is (mine certainly was) offended with the quantity of sheep's soil with which the main though closed entrance is, as one might say, hermetically sealed. I am not able to speak as to the date of the church, which is dedicated to St. Mary, but I believe the ancient family of *de Wick* were, if not the founders, at least eminent benefactors. There are two old monuments in the north transept, recessed in the wall, which are supposed to belong to this family : not far from these is another very splendid altar tomb of white marble (the sides of which are richly sculptured, and loaded with shields) belonging to and bearing a recumbent figure of Judge Newton, with another of his lady. There are other monuments, but I had not time to examine them. The congregation, which is a good one, is almost wholly composed of farmers and agricultural labourers.

Henbury.*

SOUTHEY, in the Life of the author of the Pilgrim's Progress, says, that John Bunyan at one time took great delight in bell-ringing.† My horse would seem

* Henbury comes from Haen, which in the British language signifies Old. Of Blaize Hill, which is in the neighbourhood, Sir Thomas Atkyns gives the following account:—"Near to this place is Blaize Hill, on which anciently stood a chapel dedicated to St. Blaise, but long since demolished. St. Blaise was Bishop of Sebaste in Capadocia, and a martyr. His body was first barbarously torn by iron combs, used in the cloth working trade; wherefore he is at this day the patron of the wool-combers, as also patron of the kingdom of Armenia, &c. He was afterwards beheaded. The foundation stones of the chapel were dug up in the year 1707, where many modern coins, as also ancient Roman antiquities, were found; and in a vault ten yards long, and six yards broad, supposed to have been in the church, many human bodies were discovered, whose skulls and teeth were entire, white and firm. The hill is round, and affirmed by tradition to have been a Roman fortification; and bulwarks of great height and thickness are still to be seen on the west and north sides."

† The passage in which this piece of information is given is curious, as showing how some people will run to excesses. From being a very ungodly person given to graceless practises, Bunyan ran to the other extreme, and fancied the innocent and pleasing practice of bell-ringing a dreadful sin. If it were there are some ancient and worshipful societies whom I might mention, to say nothing of the various brotherhoods who toil at rope-ends in the different church towers of Bristol, who would stand a poor chance of Heaven, they have so many Grandsire triples and Bob majors on their souls. Southey says—"Bunyan had formerly taken great delight in bell-ringing; but now that his conscience 'began to be tender,' he thought it 'a vain practice,' in other words, a sin; yet he so hankered after this his old exercise, that though he durst not pull a rope himself, he would go and look at the ringers, not without a secret feeling that to do so was unbecoming the religious character which he now professed. A fear came upon him that one of the bells might fall: to secure himself against such an accident, he stood under a beam that lay athwart the steeple from side to side; but his apprehensions being once awakened, he then considered that the bell might fall with a swing, hit

to have inherited a taste for the same tintinabular melody from his illustrious namesake, for when we reached the Down we found the echo of all Bristol's bells there before us; and the swell of sweet sounds, borne on the breeze from twenty towers, swept by us in a full flood-tide of magnificent music. John pricked up what remains of his ears, and turning his head towards Bristol, stood still without any admonition to that effect from me, and listened with a look as intent and intelligent as a horse could assume: his little nostrils dilated, his eyes expanded, and he seemed as if he would drink in the sonorous air at every sense, like the wild ass of the desert. Were I a believer in the *Metempsychosis* of Pythagoris, I should certainly have set it down that I was then bestriding the carcass that enclosed the soul of some ancient bell-ringer, and that John's spirit had migrated to him from some worthy who once pulled the great tenor in the tower of St. Stephen's: and I am not surprised at even a quadruped's appreciation of the sublime and beautiful on this occasion, so great and resistless was the body of sound, so powerful as it passed, mingling with the neighbouring peals of Westbury, that it appeared as if nothing could have arrested its course until it dispersed over the broad waters of the Severn.

The view from Henbury Hill gives a man some idea of the manner in which the *suburban* citizens of Bristol live. I could not help (even at the risk of being late for prayers) rising on my stirrups, and taking a survey of the surrounding scenery and the neat, and even elegant, villas that peeped out from amongst the little

the wall first, rebound, and so strike him in its descent. Upon this he retired to the steeple-door, thinking himself safe enough there; for if the bell should fall, he could slip out. Farther than the door he did not venture, nor did he long continue to think himself secure there; for the next fancy which possessed him was that the steeple itself might fall: and this possessed him and so shook his mind that he dared not stand at the door longer, but fled for fear the tower should come down upon him,—to such a state of nervous weakness had a diseased feeling brought his strong body and strong mind."

plantations on all sides, reminding one of roast beef and real comfort, of the number of families preparing for Church, and the number of joints being then got ready for the spit against their return. I could almost venture to tell the programme of the day's proceedings within each of those pretty freestone residences—two services attended, an early dinner eaten, and an English Sabbath wound up with closed window curtains and candles, and Handel and hyson in the drawing-room.

Having given John Bunyan's bridle to the ostler at the "Salutation," and turned from the stable-yard, I felt for the first time in my life a certain degree of diffidence in approaching an English parish church. There is nothing in a state of nature there: everything about the village is trained to look exclusive and aristocratic—the walks are tended and the hedges trimmed to the highest point of precision. In summer the flowers seem to grow formal, and the very birds moved about from twig to twig, and chirped to each other, with distant propriety. Even the same air of extreme politeness appeared to pervade the parishioners in death: their burying-ground was laid out for the best society, and the headstones might have been arranged by a Master of Ceremonies, so punctilious was their juxta position.

This overpowering gentility appalled me. I should not have ventured to laugh loud in the village lest I might awaken aristocratic echoes, and without a previous introduction I should not have dared to ask the first man I met, the road.

I had been in the habit of late, when I visited a country church, of helping myself to a pew when the sextoness was not at hand. "This will not do at Henbury, Mr. Church-Goer," said I; "you are no longer amongst bumpkins, you must not take these liberties here—every pew is like a preserve: you must not put your hand on the first door you meet, for if this green cloth lining, these soft cushions, these rich carpets, these mohair hassocks, these morocco-bound, gilt-edged

Prayer Books and Bibles lying about, be not sufficient to protect the seat from rash intrusion, you must be very dull or very daring indeed."

Meditating these things I stood in dread and doubt by the porch, looking at the tall thin cypress trees which stood like "melancholy mourners o'er the dead," and yet was afraid to enter. 'Tis true I might have taken my place amongst the poor, as I had often done before, and been under an obligation to no one ; but to tell you the truth I am not fond of this. Not that I object (Heaven forbid) to sit with my fellow-creature because he or she happens to be less fortunate than I have been : it would be a poor return to make for God's bounties to condemn those who happen not to have received them in the same abundance as myself ; but I often find when a man in a sound suit of broadcloth sits on the same bench with the poor in a parish church, the people around, who never think of previously offering him a pew, are only too ready to invent an unworthy motive for him, and attribute the act to "the pride that apes humility," the most contemptible pride of all in my opinion. I, therefore, determined if possible to procure a seat in some pew sooner than draw people's attention from their prayers, which is another effect that I find a man in fine clothes, sitting on a free form, has upon some congregations. Twice I crossed the threshold, and twice I essayed to catch the sextoness's eye, but one genteel family after another entering attracted her attention each time, and I retreated once more to the churchyard awed by the exclusive air of all I witnessed within, and the sounds of a quick succession of carriage steps being let down outside. 'Twas after my second retreat, and while I drew timidly aside to allow more fresh and favoured visitors to pass, that a gentleman walked by me ; as he reached the porch, however, he turned round, and after looking at me for a moment advanced, and in the civilest and politest manner possible said he should be very happy if I would take a place in his pew. I thanked him, accepted his

offer, and was in another moment installed in a good seat near the pulpit.

Here I have been doing Henbury all this time a great injustice, thought I as soon as I was seated: in the plenitude of my silly nervousness I have been making for myself a bugbear out of its gentility, forgetting that the essence of true gentility is civility. I have at this moment no idea who my unknown and courteous friend may be; but I take this public opportunity of publicly, as I did before privately, thanking him for his attention. It may seem a slight favour giving a man a seat in your pew, and I may perhaps be thought to overrate an accommodation which after all costs the party affording it nothing. It is not the amount of a thing, however, but the manner in which it is done, that I am in the habit of looking at; and the good taste and proper feeling, and I had almost added the quick and delicate instinct which perceived the possible embarrassment in which a stranger might be placed out of his own parish church, and which prompted him to act at once upon the impression, evidenced in my unknown friend that Christian civility, which is the first ingredient of gentility, and for the absence of which no accident of birth or fortune will make amends. The act could only have been the impulse of innate refinement; it could have arisen from no other motive. Had I descended from a softly-cushioned carriage, I should not have thanked him for the offer, for I should have considered the courtesy paid to my equipage and not to myself; but I was a plain-looking elderly person: to all appearance the possessor of little more than the sober snuff-brown, the Oxford gray trowsers which I wore, and the gingham umbrella which I carried; there was nothing in me to attract notice or command consideration—he simply saw that I was a stranger, that I must want a seat, and with the alacrity of true politeness invited me to his. Others might have opened their pew-doors after I entered the church, but it was the forethought and consideration that induced him to address me outside, and unsolicited

make an offer of accommodation, that particularly pleased me. I have walked into Henbury and other churches ere now, and seen stately men stalk by me, and enter cloth-covered pews as large as state cabins, and, though I looked about for a seat, never thought of offering me two hours' use of six square inches of their four-and-twenty feet of cushion. Yet such people may rest assured simple civilities are not at all incompatible with aristocratic pretensions, and rank raises and not lowers itself by kind urbanity to its humbler fellows.*

I would fain have another word with my unknown friend before I close my observations on this act, with the hope that through him I may be fortunate enough to convey some little advice to others. I am many years his senior: he has a quarter of a century at least to run before the hair on his head can turn as thin or as gray as mine, yet he may rest assured if he continue to cultivate the civilities of life towards his fellows without reference to rank and station, and Heaven spare him to reach my time of life, the reflection of having done so will form no unpleasant ingredient in the cup of memory. These little courtesies and amenities cost the donor nothing, and yet they are more grateful to those receiving them than many are aware of: they soften and smooth down many of the asperities which arise in the rude contest with the world, and are

* Burns, in his characteristic lines on his interview with Lord Daer, shows how what is affably natural and what is noble may happily harmonize in the same personage, without detracting one from the effect of the other:—

“ I sliding shelter'd in a nook,
 An' at his lordship steal't a look
 Like some portentous omen;
 Except good sense and social glee,
 An' (what surpris'd me) modesty,
 I marked nought uncommon.
 I watch'd the symptoms o' the Great,
 The gentle pride, the lordly state,
 The arrogant assuming;
 The feint a pride, nae pride had he,
 Nor sauce, nor state that I could see
 Mair than an honest ploughman.”

often more prized, often convey more real pleasure to the poor, than more substantial favours—they tend to make this globe more endurable, and enable us to pass over the rugged road of life a little more agreeably. On the humble, a civil word, and a small courtesy are never thrown away: they are much quicker in perceiving, and keener in their gratitude for, a trifling attention of this kind than many of us think, and the very narrowness of their circumstances, instead of debarring them from those ordinary civilities which we accord to others, ought rather to claim our consideration in a larger degree, so that the very delicacy of our manner may prevent them from morbidly feeling the humility of their situation, for it is profligacy not poverty that blunts sensitiveness. It is our roughness, I believe, that makes the poor rough, and I am convinced if we would only try the experiment of courtesy, they would become courteous also from example and imitation. Let no one fancy he humbles himself by kindness and courtesy to those below him; for the man who is afraid to be affable is afraid of his own position. Courtesy and honorable principle are *all* it requires to be a gentleman—it is these qualities that make him one, not crests and quarterings. It is, therefore, I say to young men, cultivate the amenities of life towards all, and in all your relations: you will sink in the opinion of no man, whose opinion is worth having, by doing so: it will make you friends in early age, and when you attain to mine the recollection of having done so will afford you no small satisfaction.

For so highly respectable a parish as Henbury is, I must say the parts of the service allotted to the congregation are coldly performed. They would lead one really to conclude they had no “belief,” for during the Communion Service they left the Creed altogether to the Clergyman, and he repeated it in so low a tone*

* About twelve years ago, and during the lifetime of Lord de Clifford, I recollect having noticed a curious little incident, and one characteristic of his Lordship, which occurred in this Church, and probably escaped

that it was quite impossible from where I was to hear him, though the clerk, I confess, had voice enough for himself, priest, and people. Then for singing, the ladies for the most part, at least as far as I could see, seemed too genteel to do that for themselves, thinking it quite enough to pay an organist, and give a number of charity boys an annual coat (with buttons) of gray with trowsers to match, to do that business for them. Some years ago I recollect loitering into the Church of St. Roch, at Paris, on a week-day morning, and seeing an old woman seated reading by a row of iron railings that cut off a small side chauntry from the body of the church, and on which were stuck a number of little lighted bees-wax tapers: I was thinking what it could mean, when a young lady entered, and walking up to the crone gave her a coin, whispered something into her ear, and walked off, upon which the old woman took another taper out of a little box by her side, lit it, and placed it with the rest. This explained the matter: the young lady had not time or inclination to say her prayers, and she deputed the old woman, who made a livelihood by praying all the livelong day for ladies who were too proud or too idle to pray for themselves. There is not one of the fair flock who kept their mouths closed during the singing of the Psalms at Henbury on Sunday, who would not think the pretty Parisian Papist a great fool for her pains, in supposing that Heaven would be satisfied with her orisons second-hand; but after all, I do not see the great difference it makes whether you are vicariously prayed for or sung for—whether you give an old woman a half-franc to do

general notice. The Baron's seat was under the reading-desk, and the clergyman of the day was reading some portion of the morning service in a measured and slow tone, when his Lordship, who was of a most impatient temperament, and did not like spending more time even at his prayers than he could help, turned round, looked up in the clergyman's face with an expression that said as plain as words, "I can't stand this," shut his large Prayer-book emphatically, and sat down in the most pointed manner. The clergyman could not have helped noticing it; but whether he quickened his pace to keep up with lordly impatience or not is another thing.

that for you which you ought to do for yourself, or fancy you do enough for a solemn part of the service when you clothe a dozen charity children in rough cloth and rows of buttons for singing, and keep your mouth shut yourself. And the curious—I had almost said provoking—part of it generally is, that there is hardly one of those young ladies who are silent in church, who will not, in their own drawing-rooms at home, and before their own piano-fortes, sing Handel and Mozart's music for you by the hour, and dash through "Giorno d'orrore," a Pastorello from Benedict, or the last Italian air, with a determination most magnanimous. Oh, that those pretty warblers would only consider how much sweeter their soft tones would sound in the old parish church than by one even of Clementi's best instruments at home; they can have no idea how harmoniously their beautiful voices would blend with the old organ and those of the charity children, in a simple psalm under the solemn cope of the ancient nave, or they would not keep their pretty lips so inactively together, or their little tongues so mute within the closed ivory barrier of their white teeth. I have been to oratorios and concerts many in my day, for in early life I was fond of those things, and I still play a little on the flute every evening; but never have I heard anything please me or reach my heart with half the touching beauty of the 137th Psalm, when sung one summer Sabbath morning by a number of sweet female voices in the little rustic church of Madley, Salop. Whether it was my particular frame of mind, the time, the season, or the association, I cannot say; but I shall never forget the touching tenderness with which the tones of their voices then fell upon my ear in the beautiful lines—

"O Salem, our once happy seat,
When I of thee forgetful prove."

So it seemed to me, for the moment, did the captive daughters of Judah mourn their exile, and sing when far from, yet yearning after, their own beloved and beautiful Zion.

This requires little musical learning from young ladies: all it wants are willing hearts and cheerful voices: in fact, I am no advocate for elaborate displays in parish churches as a custom; when the congregation are *obliged* to leave all the work to the organ loft. The more simple the singing, so that man, woman, and child may join with heart and voice, the better; for I think with old Wicklif, that fine exhibitions rather tend to awaken admiration than adoration, and "to lett men fro the sentence and understanding of that that was sung, and to maken men weary and undisposed to study God's law." *

The fair portion, however, of the congregation seemed to be the least inclined to open their lips or exert their lungs, for many of the other sex did both, and with

* Wicklif's condemnation of Romish Church music, from which I quote this sentence, is quaint enough. He says—"Mattins, and mass, and evensong, placebo, and dirige, and commendation, and mattins of our lady, were ordained of sinful men, to be sung with high crying, to lett men fro the sentence and understanding of that that was sung, and to maken men weary and undisposed to study God's law. It stirreth vain men to dauncing rather than mourning. And if they seyen that angels hearen God by praise in heaven; seye that we kunnen not that song, but they ben in full victory of their enemies, and we ben in perilous battle; and in the valley of weeping and mourning, and our song letteth us fro better occupation, and stirreth us to many great sins, and to forget usselves."—*Of Prelates*, c. 11. The choral services were not introduced into England until the latter end of the 11th century, and then by Osmund, Bishop of Sarum. It appears a short time previous to the Reformation to have run to such excesses in the churches on the Continent, that Erasmus in his Annotations on the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, enlarging on the 10th verse of the 14th chap.—"There are it may be so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification," seizes the opportunity to denounce the practice in the following terms: "We have introduced into the churches, a certain elaborate and theatrical species of music, accompanied with a tumultuous diversity of voices. All is full of trumpets, cornets, pipes, fiddles, and singing. We come to church as to a play-house. And for this purpose, ample salaries are expended on organists, and societies of boys, whose whole time is wasted in learning to sing. These fooleries are become so agreeable, that the monks, especially in England, think of nothing else. To this end, even in the Benedictine monasteries of England, many youths, boys, and other vocal performers are sustained, who, early every morning, sing to the organ the mass of the Virgin Mary, with the most harmonious modulations of voice."

good will; and one hearty old gentleman whom I noticed near the reading-desk, whose years exceeded mine in number as his hair did mine in whiteness, sung away out of a large lettered Prayer-book, with an old English and orthodox energy quite refreshing. He appeared to me the Sir Roger de Coverley of the parish: he had a word of affability and inquiry for every one, and every one had a bow of respect and deference for him.*

I can well recollect the first time (now several years since) I visited Henbury Church on a fine summer's evening: it was with a friend, a stranger, to whom I wished to show the neighbourhood. The little village, the surrounding country seats, the brook, the bridge, the old church, with its low flat tower, the picturesque gothic school close by—upon all the soft air of peace, comfort, and repose seemed to rest, reminding one of what I think Mary Howitt has said, that no other country in the world has a parallel for an English

* How far the following patches of the character of Sir Roger may be applicable to the estimable person to whom I allude, I leave to the ingenuity of the reader to find out:—"As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised in a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees any body else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servant to them. Several other of the old knight's peculiarities break out upon these occasions. Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing-psalms half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces "Amen" three or four times to the same prayer, and sometimes stands up when every body else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing. As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir until Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side: and every now and then inquires how such an one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent." I am sure I need not draw the reader's attention to the whole of this paper in the *Spectator* (the 112th of the 2nd vol.), for he or she must know it as well as I do; nor need I say that it is in my opinion, as it must be in the readers', the perfection of writing. That paper alone (short as it is) would have immortalized the writer.

village. We crossed the pretty churchyard with its cypresses, and looking as quiet in its "russet mantle clad," as if none but those who "slept in the Lord" slept there, to the sextoness's cottage, to solicit permission to see the interior of the church. The good woman took down the key, and throwing her bonnet loosely on her head, civilly complied with our request. The "dim religious light" through the painted glass, fell with its varied but subdued hues on the little chancel, sculptured altar screen, carpet, and communion cloth, while a parting ray or two from the setting sun, glancing obliquely through the more western windows, lingered on one or two of the many white marble tablets that around recorded the worth of those who had gone, and the affectionate recollection of those who remained behind. A silent church is at all times a peculiarly solemn scene, but Henbury church seemed to me on this evening particularly so: all three indeed, even the sextoness, appeared to feel I thought the "influence" of the hour and place, and we walked noiselessly about, as if instinctively understanding each other's impressions and unwilling to disturb either them or the holy quiet of "God's House" with the fall of our footsteps, or the sound of our own voices. The fretted roof, the long drawn aisle, the pointed arch, and the lofty column of the cathedral, have all their awe-creating power; but the soft repose of this beautiful village church was of a different character, and had a more soothing and almost as solemn an effect, which was not at all diminished but rather enhanced by the pretty even-song of the robin and green linnet without.

And yet, in point of architectural proportions or detail, Henbury has nothing to boast of: the columns and arches that separate the nave from the north and south aisles (which had been beautifully, and I believe newly ceiled with oak), are of a clumsy and incongruous character, and the main chancel does not lie in a straight line with the rest of the church: but the refinement and liberality of the parishioners, evidenced in every

part of the building, hide all original defects: all that good taste and munificence could do has been done by the neighbouring gentry, and the sextoness pointed out one or two stained windows which had been brought from Italy as presents by wealthy parishioners. All this does credit to the place and the people: pride becomes a virtue when the beauty and adornment of the parish church is its object.

The charities and schools connected with the parish are excellently managed and liberally supported; and I have heard that much is done by the rich to alleviate the condition of their less fortunate fellow-parishioners.

I have brought the only charge I had to bring against the congregation: that is a want of *heartiness* in the performance of their part of the service; in other respects, for so large a number, I never saw a better ordered or more attentive congregation in my life.

The sermon was a fair specimen of mediocrity, delivered in a tiresome and monotonous tone: there was nothing remarkable one way or the other about it. I have tried to recollect the text, but have forgotten both that and the matter.

I have received the following letter this week. It is the second invitation that has reached me from the same quarter, from which it would appear that the good people of Thornbury are upon *thorns* about me. The writer has to apologise to the readers of the *Bristol Times* for two things—first, for seducing me into a villainous pun (a practice I am not addicted to generally), and secondly, for using so much Latin, while he might find plenty of English to suit his purpose: one of his years ought to be above such weakness:—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BRISTOL TIMES.

Your occasional correspondent "The Church-Goer" envelopes himself with so thick a mist, as to the spot

where he may be found, that I cannot ascertain where the piece of intelligence which I wish to convey to him should be addressed ; for, notwithstanding the hints he drops the public of the notable insignia of "a snuff-coloured coat," "a pair of spectacles," and "a large Bible," still I cannot by these inuendos guess the No. and street of his habitation : therefore I must exclaim with my old friend Terence (as these remarks are no clearer to me than the marks given to the-thick-headed Bæotians for solving the *Ænigmas* of the Sphinx), "Non Hercle, intelligo,—Davus sum, non Œdipus." I, therefore, must throw myself on your goodnatured readiness in obliging the public by inserting in your favourite columns the communications to him, that otherwise would waste "their sweetness on the desert air." As you are the known happy medium for conveying to him "pheasants and venison," I am confident you will not hesitate to communicate to him a piece of intelligence equally interesting to himself and society at large, inasmuch as it regards the moral and religious welfare of the reading and reflecting public. Reckoning on the familiar habits he seems to be on with you, of "being accommodated with the gift of a sheet of paper," "the loan of a pen," and "room at your desk in the office," I am convinced you will readily comply with my request. The purpose of this petition is, that he will forthwith avail himself of the assistance of his good friend John Bunyan, and gratify a longing and expectant parish with his presence, as it will extend his ride out by a little more than a mile beyond the place where he has promised to partake of "eggs and bacon, after hearing the sapient discourse of the Rev. Divine at *Alveston*." When he is told that the neighbouring parish has been for some time on the tiptoe of impatience for his arrival, he will not fail to gratify so reasonable a desire. And as by the means of his friend John, the radii of his visiting circle are so much extended, he can with ease perform the journey, the inspection of the fine old church and castle of Thorn-

bury, will amply repay the trouble of enquiry; and when he has been gratified by hearing the Vicar's sermon, and gained all the antiquarian secrets of the Castle, formerly belonging to the unhappy wight, whose head the cruel king ordered to be chopped off, he will of course honour one of the many candidates for the favour with his presence at dinner. Should not the high and mighty Vicar give the invite, there is the mayor of the borough, who once called himself a Quaker, but now attends his church duly every Sunday; he will most hospitably entertain him. As he has only one gala day in the year *officially*, "The Church-Goer" must not expect any great splendour, for as he only sports "Coffee, toast and butter on Christmas day in the morning," he will not find

* "Prætextam, et latum clavum, prunæque batillum."

However, should these expectations fail, I'll take care to wait for him and Johnny Bunyan at the Ship at Alveston, where, as you have declared you don't like "cold water or horse ponds," we'll be snug and enjoy ourselves.

"Animæ quales neque candidiores."

Yours truly,

ECCLESIAE AMICUS.

Thornbury, Nov. 11th, 1844.

I'll dine with you upon one condition—that you promise not to quote a single line of Latin during dinner.

Stapleton.

KNOWLEDGE is a most Protean thing: it is to be met with under so many shapes and such various forms, that one ought to pass neither object nor individual indifferently by, lest the desired quality be contained in one or the other. For my part I think I have picked up more information by the roadside than in books. Riding or walking, on foot and on horseback, what all affect to desire, and many sincerely seek after, may be encountered day and night, in town and country.

Fully impressed with this conviction, I never hear the approaching sound of horse's feet in my rear that I do not instantly set about preparing an appropriate salutation, wherewith to accost the rider the moment he overtakes me, in the hope of detaining him to be my companion, for a time at least on the way; and I seldom meet a foot-passenger going the same direction as myself, without wishing it were the fashion to ride double, that by giving him a seat on John's croup I might have the benefit of his society for a mile or two. Indeed I have upon some occasions lately—more in the sociability than gallantry of my nature, I confess—meditated mounting a pillion for the temporary accommodation of the fair country pedestrians, whom, Prayer Book in hand, I often meet in my rural rides—bound for the same destination, the same old parish church as myself. But this is an age of scandal and levity, when an elderly gentleman cannot indulge in a common wayside courtesy, without being subject to have his motives and movements both misconstrued. This

sneering, innuendo, imputation-passing custom is a gross tyranny—it terrifies a man from following the impulses of his better nature, and frightens him from the performance of roadside civilities as pure and disinterested, as innocent, as anything can be. For instance, what prevents me, the proprietor of a strong and steady nag, purchasing a pillion, and offering (which I might do without any inconvenience to myself or John,) the first young, old, or middle-aged woman whom I met a seat for a mile or two, or in fact for as far as she happened to be going my way, on the soft cushion balanced so comfortably behind me? What prevents me, I say, doing this, and having a pleasant companion, and a little agreeable conversation, instead of a lonely ride in monastic solitude along the uninteresting road, as I often have? A scandalous and a remark-making age. If any one met me jogging along on John with an honest countrywoman poised on a pillion behind me, and both of us chatting to our mutual entertainment, it may be edification, would my grey hairs or my sober port, think you, protect me from impertinent observation and rude reflections? No, no. The Church would be scandalized through the Church-Goer: I'd be made the subject of caustic conversation amongst my friends, and perhaps of a sly paragraph in the newspapers. And yet what harm is there in it. It is true that any one seated behind, to keep herself steady and balanced, must grasp him who rode before rather tightly round the waist: but “evil to him who evil inferred” from the fact of a rustic arm—be the same plump or lean—passed for so innocent a purpose round my snuff-coloured coat. It was only last Sunday week, as I rode to Henbury, that a gentleman's servant drove by me in a gig, and suddenly pulling up a few hundred yards in front, invited a decent looking young woman, who was going to church, to a seat beside him, which she accepted without the slightest hesitation or embarrassment, but simply I could see as a natural roadside courtesy. Why have I not a pillion, said I, to make a tender of the same

civilities, and be thanked in the same way? Had John Bunyan the conversational powers of Baalam's beast, he might have observed in reply, "Because you are afraid." And he'd be right. I'd start a pillion to-morrow if it were not for the scandalizing propensities of the age. It would be only an act of common gratitude if I did so. John was a gift from a number of good-hearted ladies to me: there was a small balance in hand after his purchase, and if I expended that in a pillion for them, it would still be an inadequate return for their kindness.

In my present ride to Stapleton, however, I was not in want of company. Near Ashley-road I heard the sharp trot of a horse behind me; and as the rider came up with me I was ready with my salutation, and wished him "a good morning, and a pleasant journey." "Thank you," said my new friend, who had short cut whiskers and a white neckcloth, a half serious half secular air, and spoke in a formal and rather nasal twang, "I can hardly be said to be going on a journey, if it may not be said to be a journey of grace;" and he added, by way of supplement, something between a groan and a sigh.

"Oh, indeed!" said I, knowing not what else to say; but on perceiving that my companion was not very expeditious in renewing the conversation, I added, after a slight pause, "Then I have the pleasure (though, from his appearance, I candidly confess I hoped I had not,) of addressing a clergyman?" "No," said he, looking up as though he would thank Heaven for a happy exemption; "I preach the Gospel."

Humph, thought I, that leaves anything but a flattering converse to the poor clergy; but I determined to let it pass, for I dislike argument of all kinds, and particularly on religious subjects. It is a profitless waste of mental strength, in my opinion; and so disinclined am I to all dialectics, that I make it a point never to dispute a matter with a man: if he talk nonsense I have my own notion of it, but I leave him

in undisturbed possession of his. As I never found any one thank me yet for trying to set them right, or who, though they might prove, could satisfy me, that I was wrong, I have concluded that it is quite a Quixotic piece of intellectual chivalry to run a tilt against the personal errors and misconceptions of men ; so I prefer my ease to encountering disputatious people, who may make any assertion they please without my gainsaying them, provided they will not ask me for my express concurrence, but leave me in silent enjoyment of my own sentiments. Indeed, so great is my repugnance to controversy, and the expenditure of language and the exertion of lungs which it involves, that I think if a man were to propound the once popular error that the moon was made of green cheese, at a table where I was, and challenged my opinion, sooner than go to the trouble of maintaining a contrary view, I should quietly reply, that as "it was a question of natural philosophy, it was to a certain extent one of speculation also ; he, therefore, had an undoubted right to form any opinion he pleased on the subject ; for my part, I might probably hold a different one, but as I had no actual means of ascertaining the precise materials of that planet, I should not be rash enough to think of disputing a point upon which I was so imperfectly informed."

Now, my new equestrian neighbour looked as though he was sharp set for controversy, armed on all sides like Lucian's Philosopher or a hedge-hog, with "thorny points of doctrine," prickly, as one might say, with texts of scripture—with quotations innumerable at his finger ends, ready at hand to be pushed forward at every move of the game of argumentation, with all the practised adroitness of a draft-player. Schismatics are always arguing with each other on election, perfection, predestination, &c., and they show an expertness—I will not say a reverence—in the use of scripture, which is quite surprising. Set two tailors or shoemakers of adverse sects down together at a trial of skill, and though both should be bunglers at their trade, they'll

astonish you by their dexterity as disputants: Mr. Stanton or his French antagonist never moved their pawns, knights and kings about on the chess-board with more ingenuity than these will check-mate each his neighbour in turn with texts of scripture. Gay says—

“Wits are game-cocks to one another;”

but rival sects are still more so. Confront two opposite schismatics and their feathers are up in one moment, and the next they are closed in deadly dispute. I used the word “deadly” figuratively, but I almost might employ the term in a literal sense also: for I recollect some years ago dining with a leading non-conformist, where I was, I believe, the only Churchman present, and as I said little or nothing, the company generally were not aware of my creed, and were, in fact, barely cognizant of my presence. There were more than one Dissenting minister at table, and the conversation was altogether of a polemical—they would call it of a religious—character. One of the ministers—a little sharp-set, dogmatic, disputatious-looking man—had, I could collect, a pamphlet war with another dissenting teacher of a different sect some time before: to this frequent reference was made, and the little man “fought all his battles o’er again” with extreme ardour and vollubility for the company; until at length, rising by degrees in the exultant warmth of his narration, he exclaimed with a tone of real triumph, and half-affected regret,—“But it was my last pamphlet that did it: he never got over that, poor man! I believe it killed him, for he died soon after!” Here was sectarian charity doubly illustrated; here was one man dying from the effects of mortified pride and bitterness, and the other, though affecting to deplore, exulting in that death as an evidence of his own triumph. For my part, I have no genius for religious controversy; and I cannot conceive how people will go on hair-splitting, and accumulating volumes, and hating and abusing each other about thorny points of doctrine amongst dissenters, and in the church about little points of discipline, as they

do. People that do this can have minds for nothing more enlarged: while they fritter away their attention on little things, they have no conception of the grandeur of the Christian religion. Cramped and confined as they are within the petty range of their own disputations, they have no capacity for nobler views; it is as if they had been transported to the summit of Pisgah, and instead of looking forth on the magnitude and glory of the prospect around, they set squabbling about the shape and properties of some petty plant at their feet.

Putting my companion down for one of those narrow-minded controversialists ever ready and ever eager to do battle for any and every minute point of doctrine, I determined to shake him off as soon as possible, preferring my own thoughts to such a companion, for he seemed one of those gloomy, sullen faced individuals who'd scowl a fine morning out of countenance, and rebuke the birds for singing, and the very flowers for growing gay. When the thankfulness and sunshine of one's own heart lead them to rejoice with nature, such a fellow, as the Antiquary would say, is not the "Phoenix" of way-side associates.

My companion, however, perceiving I had no inclination to renew the colloquy, perversely determined to do so himself, for after a preliminary groan or two he said, taking up the thread of our former conversation, "No; remembering the fourth commandment, I should not be found doing no manner of work; if I had not a call to preach the Gospel as the Scriptures says, Wo is me if I preach not the Gospel."

I said I concluded that he was a Dissenting Minister, but he intimated that he was not exactly a minister, but I think he said one of the "Itinerant Brethren," a sort of lay preacher, one of a class who make incursions from Bristol in hundreds every Sunday morning to the surrounding villages, where in dissenting chapels and hired rooms they sermonize, much to their own gratification, and they doubtless think the edification of those who hear them, to poor people who are too good

to go to their parish church. My friend was bound for the neighbourhood of Frenchay, and had paid I suppose the hire of a horse that he might have the pleasure of launching a six days discourse on a patient audience.

"But *you* cannot have the same excuse for working your beast on the Sabbath," continued my friend after a pause, "and art therefore wilfully breaking the commandment."

"But I may have a call," I replied; "if not to preach to hear the gospel—I'm going to church."

The Itinerant brother shook his head, and I saw he would not admit this as a valid excuse. "Ah, said he, you're going to hear an unconverted man in a house with a steeple to it."

"Then I suppose," said I, smiling, "you think I would do better to accompany you to Frenchay, and listen to the discourse of which you are now brimful."

"Undoubtedly," said he; "you would then hear one who has been born again."

"But what proof have I of that?" said I, amazed with the complacency with which the gentleman advertised his own holiness, and decided on the unrighteousness of others.

"By their fruits you shall know them."

"A very good criterion," said I, "but the only thing I have the pleasure of knowing about you is the charity which prompts you to conclude that others are unconverted; and the humility which induces you to declare that that change has taken place in yourself: may I ask when that important event occurred, and under what circumstances, for you seem so sure of it that it must have been a very marked incident in your life?"

"It will be five years ago, come the 14th of February, that I went to a revival meeting: I was not ten minutes in the room when I was led to cry out into groaning and crying for my sins, and in ten minutes more I was on the penitential form, a converted soul."

Heaven help us, thought I, if none are saved but

those who pass through a few moments of feverish and morbid excitement, in which the fears and fancy are both worked upon by a power so wild and extatic. Here this man goes into a room where one man is loudly praying, while others, terrified by the horrors of hell which he is hideously depicting, are as loudly groaning and crying out on all sides: he kneels down, and is, what no weak mind can avoid being, acted upon by the surrounding excitement, and, after groaning with the rest for a short time, works himself up to a pitch of enthusiasm, when he fancies he is saved, and acting on this impression he advances to a form set apart for those who have attained to this point, and ever after thinks himself converted, and qualified to denounce as "in danger of hell fire" all whose more sober and disciplined natures would never allow them to fall into similar excess. I should be the last man in the world to make light of conversion, or the Christian life of which it is said to be the beginning; but I believe that morbid and wild excitement—that momentary passage of nervous enthusiasm, that ebullition which some sects specifically call "conversion," and which is physically unattainable by calm or dispassionate natures, or, in fact by any but wild, weak, fitful, and ignorant persons—no more resembles the new Christian life, to which Christ referred in his nocturnal interview with Nicodemus, than a paroxysm does a settled principle.

I hinted to my companion that one of the fruits for which I looked was charity—charity in our estimation and judgment of others: and though I might be going to hear a clergyman, who had not graduated through a revival meeting to the penitential form, I might ride my horse quietly to hear our beautiful services in a country church, without being said to commit a sinful breach of the Commandments.

"Beautiful service!" said he, with a most depreciating tone: "words, words, dry words—set phrases strung together by ungodly Bishops."

"You ill-conditioned Vandal!" said I, foolish enough

to lose my temper for the first time I believe for ten years; but I could never stand patiently to hear our beautiful Liturgy abused. "If I were not more charitable than yourself I'd ride you down; the few who have adorned non-conformity with their talents and their piety, have pronounced our Liturgy perfection. Robert Hall has passed a panegyric on it as just as it is glowing; and John Wesley said, 'I believe there is no Liturgy either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more of a solid, scriptural, rational piety, than the Common Prayers of the Church of England:' and here you a—a cobbler of shoes for aught I know,—

"A tailor and habit maker," interposed my companion.

"Well, a tailor and habit maker, can find no more mannerly description for it than 'set phrases strung together by ungodly Bishops!'"

And so saying, without wishing him good morning, being now at Stapleton, I turned into the Bell stable-yard, I am ashamed to confess it, in something like a passion.

I was so wrapt in "virtuous indignation" on entering that I forgot for a moment or two to dismount; so there I sat in the saddle muttering "strung together by ungodly Bishops," until the ostler overhearing me, and thinking I was inquiring for "our respected Diocesan," said, "the Palace? please, Sir, you just past it." This recalling me to my senses I dismounted, and hastened out of the yard without looking before me, the effect of which was that I nearly upset his Lordship of Gloucester and Bristol,* who happened at the moment to be entering the churchyard wicket on the same destination as myself.

Neither I nor his Lordship were a bit too early. Had I been too late, however, I should put it down to that Itinerant Brother and his attack on the Church. The

* Stapleton is the Bishop's Parish Church, the Palace adjoining the village.

malignant to speak of the Book of Common Prayer as he did! Why it was only the other day that a churchman, who was born a Dissenter, attributed his change (when speaking to me) to that very Liturgy so reviled. It is an interesting fact that deserves to be related. He said he had been reared as a strict Dissenter, and never recollected to have seen a Book of Common Prayer in his father's house, and never entered a church until he was eighteen, when one Sunday morning, being in the country, mere curiosity induced him to enter one, and for the first time he heard our inimitable Liturgy, which came upon him with its piety-breathing and comprehensive petitions, the simple and beautiful majesty of its addresses to the Almighty, the contrite humility which pervades its penitential confessions, and the fervour with which it enables faith to express itself—all these, presented to him for the first time in the full force of freshness and novelty, made such an impression on him that from that day forward he was a churchman, declaring that he could never again bear to listen to the bald and erratic extemporisings of Dissent.

In a pew near me was, I believe, a marriage party—their first appearance in public after that interesting ceremony; which first appearance I wish they'd make in the market place instead of in church, for there is scarce a young lady in the congregation who says her prayers on such occasions, but keeps peeping and peering towards the pew full of white lace, white gauze, and white gloves. There is a churching pew and a christening pew—there ought to be a marriage pew also; a place set apart in some retired and secluded spot, in which the young people might “blush unseen” for the first time after the honeymoon; it might be appropriately decorated with all the chubby cherubs collected from the altar screen and mural monuments around.

Stapleton Church is a very plain, unpretending, semi-Roman kind of structure. It is dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and consists of one aisle and a low tower

at the West end: the outside is poor, but the interior is very neatly, and seemingly newly, done up, the walls and ceiling being marked out with courses in imitation of masonry, the latter having the effect of an arch. The building is very pleasantly situated, and in summer when the casements are left open, and the refreshing breeze and song of birds allowed to enter, it gives you an admirable idea, surrounded as it is with cheerful villas and sylvan scenery, of an English village church. The congregation are numerous and respectable.

The text was from the 10th chapter of Luke, where the man journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho falls amongst thieves. I was very much pleased with the manner—earnest, spiritual, and yet practical—in which it was treated: there was no hair-splitting about the sermon: the broad, beautiful and important doctrine of duty to our neighbour was urged in all its enlarged and Christian liberality. I confess I am myself much in favour of such occasional sermons: congregations require to be kept at times in mind of their worldly as well as their spiritual duties, and a good, searching, practical discourse, enables men to detect and discover spurious self-righteousness in themselves and others; for however pious they may fancy themselves, if they be not ready or be disinclined to do a service to a fellow creature, even at some cost “they deceive themselves,” and their righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees—persons whose hypocritical self complacency and smooth-faced professional piety, which bore no practical fruit, our Lord seems to have lost no opportunity of unmasking and exposing. If hypocrisy, or self-righteousness, or unphilanthropic selfishness of any kind had to be illustrated, a Pharisee or a Scribe was for the most part selected as the exemplars. And the world is yet too full of these Pharisaical sort of people; they are, it is true, no longer to be seen walking abroad under flowing robes and wide phalacteries, but they may be still found clothed in broadcloth, and beneath many a

black coat and smooth exterior. The high road between Jerusalem and Jericho is not the only one on which your Levite and Samaritan may be met. We see those who commend themselves as holy, and deem themselves safe in spiritual matters—amongst the elect as one might say; yet who in their conduct are selfish and penurious, hard-hearted and incapable of a generous act, “passing by on the other side” sooner than put themselves to the slightest cost and trouble to do a service to a suffering or needy fellow-creature: while those at whom they shake their heads as sinners or Samaritans, are capable of the most generous conduct, and do the most disinterested acts even for the stranger, at the sacrifice of ease or the outlay of money. I find this circumstance has also struck the penetrating mind of Shaftesbury in his *Inquiry Concerning Virtue*. I know a freethinking philosopher is no authority on Christianity, but our own every day experience and acquaintance with the world will confirm the truth of his words so far as the following sentence is concerned. He remarks in the opening of the first Book, and while observing on the occasion of the inquiry, “We have known people who having the appearance of great zeal in *Religion*, have yet wanted even the common affections of *Humanity*, and shown themselves extremely degenerate and corrupt. Others again who have paid little regard to Religion, and been considered as mere Atheists, have yet been observed to practice the rules of *Morality*, and act in many cases with such good meaning and affection towards mankind, as might seem to force an acknowledgment of their being virtuous.” I do not say that acts of almsgiving or good works do or will serve as a substitute for the higher and spiritual requirements of Christianity; for one of the noblest and most disinterested acts of almsgiving on record was performed by a Pagan, Solyman the Great, the redoubted antagonist of the third Crusade, who we are told ordered in his last will charities to be distributed to the poor, without distinction of Jew, Christian, or

Mahometan; "intending by his legacy," says the historian, "to inculcate that all men are brethren, and that when we would assist them we ought not to inquire what they believe, but what they feel—an admirable lesson to Christians, though from an infidel."* Almsgiving is not therefore Christianity, but it is an excellent addition to Christianity: in fact true Christianity cannot exist without it; for the religion that will not prompt a man to serve his neighbour is unreal. "To set out virtue in words," says St. Cyprian, "and destroy the same in facts, is nothing worth:" (*Nihil prodest verbis proferre virtutem, et factis destruere*). And I find in the same Abridgment of the Sayings of the martyred Bishop of Carthage (that by Laziardius Celestinus) two or three others so pointed in their character, and so bearing on the subject, that I cannot resist quoting them. He says, "Let nothing sleep in your treasures that may profit the poor" (*Ne dormiat in thesauris tuis, quod pauperi prodesse potest*). And again, "He that giveth alms to the poor sacrificeth to God an odour of sweet smell" (*Qui pauperi eleemosynam dat, Deo suavitatis odorem sacrificat*). I shall conclude with one which possesses most ingenuity, and is an answer to those who quote large families as an excuse for not giving. "The more children and greater household that thou hast at home, the more cause thou hast not to hoard up but to disperse abroad, for that many sins are to be redeemed, many consciences are to be purged." (*Quo pluris domi sunt tibi liberi, hoc plus tibi non recondendum, sed organdam est, quia multorum jam delicta redimenda sunt, multorum purgandæ conscientiæ*).

Having detained you so long, I have nothing more to

* This is the same generous, valiant, and enlightened prince who, during his fatal illness, ordered his winding-sheet to be carried as a standard through every street of Damascus, while a crier went before the person who bore that ensign of mortality, and proclaimed with a loud voice, "This is all the remains of the mighty Saladin, the conqueror of the East."

tell you than that the Rev. W. R. Bailey is Perpetual Curate of Stapleton, and was the preacher on the present occasion.

Fishponds.

SOME patriotic and poetic "Exile of Erin," betaking himself into voluntary banishment from his "beautiful isle," composed a valedictory address to the fair city of the South, which began with the following words:—

"Farewell to thee, Cork, and thy *sugar-loaf steeple* ;"*

but the manner in which the spire of Fishponds is placed in its present pre-eminence is enough to elicit an epic in its praise, and that of its architect also. I perceive, too, to preserve so rare a design for the benefit of "future and imitative ages," they have constructed a lightning conductor, which is ingeniously carried down outside the edifice from apex to base—a somewhat singular circumstance, from which I conclude that the parish authorities—apprehensive lest the electric fluid, in envy of so fair a structure, should entertain a pointed and particular spite against the spire of Fishponds—have taken every possible means in their power to protect so sublime and symmetrical an object from the effects of "oak-cleaving thunderbolts."

Fishponds (so called, it is shrewdly conjectured by some eminent philologists, from its having been once the residence of fish) is a most miserable looking place—so cold and cheerless, indeed, that a man instinctively buttons his coat and quickens his pace as he passes through it. I met nothing whatever to interest me on

* Refineries would seem to be a fertile source for furnishing similies for the loftiest portion of ecclesiastical structures; for I heard an honest sugar baker once compare Redcliff spire to a *titler*—a loaf (I believe) with the cone cut off.

the road, save two detachments of the rising generation proceeding with a pair of bull-terriers to regale themselves with a dog fight, and indulging by the way in anything but delectable conversation. My good fellows, thought I, I wish I were the Rev. Wm. Mirehouse for once in my life, and I'd find other occupation for you on Sunday morning; for Mr. M. is a magistrate as well as a minister, and "doubly armed" against vice—with the Bible in one hand and the Statute-book in the other—he makes the treadmill sometimes second his moral admonitions, and his flock are less inclined to break the Commandments, when they know that breaking stones at Lawford's Gate is likely to follow.

The day was "frosty but kindly," and as I felt John's gait rather slow for a quick circulation I dismounted, and walked by his side. This would have been pleasant enough on any other road, but I looked round me in vain for the characteristics of English life and comfort, which can be seen, though presented in a different dress, as well in winter as in summer: the woodbine and clymatis had disappeared, but there were no hedges of holly and evergreens, looking as robust in their hardy verdure and close compactness as if they had agreed to stick together in stout defiance of frost and snow: the red roses, like beauty in the blushing bloom of youth, had gone, but there was not even a tall spinster-like chrysanthemum to take their place: we can no longer expect to see the soft geranium looking out in rich and varied clustres from the open lattice, but hardly a less cheering sight is the ruddy reflection of the cottage fire, gladdening and greeting the traveller's eye as he passes the window, and telling of a pleasant and cheerful interior, of the smooth-sanded floor, and the polished hearthstone.

I saw none of these things around me to relieve the signs of cold and care-worn winter, and was wishing myself, prayers said and service over, on my way back, when I thought I was like a great many in the world more anxious to escape from the sight of want than

ready to relieve it. Heaven, for its own wise purposes, implants in us all a disinclination to witness misery, with the intent that when we meet with it we may do all in our power to relieve it; but this instinct, I fear, far oftener prompts us to escape from the sight of, than assist, suffering; as if, when we turned our backs upon and banished it from our minds, we did not leave it behind in all its dismal, abiding, benumbing reality.

But though we fly from the sight of want we cannot escape it; it will follow us in such a season as this personified in a thousand shivering, pinching, and hungry forms: crouching in doorways from the biting air, chattering its teeth near crossings, sheltering itself by corners from the cutting blast; it appears to us with its blanched features and its ragged figures, imposing upon us responsibilities from which we cannot escape but at our peril, and forcing itself upon our notice in such a palpable shape as to leave us without an excuse to Heaven. A hundred other monitors call our attention to misery: our own sensations and our feelings are in themselves so many hints to duty: we feel the keen air through our own thick close-buttoned moleskin, and yet we pass the half-clad, houseless creature, while the loose coin in our waistcoat pocket beneath remains as it were to rise up in judgment against us: the frost bites our fingers through our warm gloves, while the stock-ingless feet of the poor, purpled with cold, cannot move us to practical pity.

This is the season of all others which leaves us without apology for neglect. There is hunger and want in summer as well as in winter; but hunger is an internal suffering, and in the warm summer weather many a fasting pauper may pass us without carrying the witness of want in their faces; but the half-clad creature trembling in the streets when the thermometer is below zero, is too obvious an object to be overlooked: it won't let us plead ignorance or glaze over our neglect with the excuse that we had not seen it. If we, warmly clad and well fed, feel the effects of cold so severely, we

can have no difficulty in forming an estimate of the privation and pain of those who at this inclement time have the weather as it were conspiring with the world against them. I looked into the police office as I was passing by the Council House on Tuesday last, and amongst the first cases brought up were two poor wretches for stealing coal: pinched with cold and misery, and tired of shivering before an empty grate, they could only have turned thieves through sheer necessity, and, similarly circumstanced, I fear I should myself be disposed to covet a lump of my neighbour's Newport Red Ash; they are now, however, provided with food and fuel in the City Gaol.

I was some evenings ago sitting by my fire in a warm dressing gown and worsted slippers; I had had my two glasses of sherry, and was watching the little jets of gas as they burst out in fitful brilliancy from the black lumps between the bars, while a plate of walnut shells, the *debris* of my desert, crackled and blazed up in cheerful unison with that first of English comforts, a sea coal fire. The only sounds that reached me from outside were the clear ringing echo of the passenger's footsteps on the dry frosty flag-way, and a kind of gusty cry of "Muffin—hot muffin," so that disengaged as my ear was, I had little difficulty in hearing a single knock at the door. It was of a peculiar character, or I dare say I should not have noticed it; it was timid and low, as if the benumbed fingers which held the knocker hesitated in their office; a second followed, a little louder it is true, but the increased force I could see evidently cost the author a severe effort, as if he or she, or whoever it might be, raised the hammer high and faltered with fear as it fell. I rung and told the servant to answer the door, which she did, but it was hardly opened when it was shut suddenly and sharply again. On bringing up my tea soon after, I enquired who it was that called, for I took an interest in the knock. "A woman with matches, Sir," said she, with a somewhat indignant tone; "it is like their cool assurance;

they have grown as impudent as can be since the frost set in, and knock at the door as if a body had nothing to do but answer them!"

Thus, thought I, the frost that supplies the robin with boldness to perch on our window sill, and crave the crumb from our table, drives the poor shivering creature to the habitation of his or her fellow also for relief; the keen cutting elements that indurate the ground and embitter the very air with cold, conquer the fears and diffidence of both, and compel them, though not without some doubtings, to approach the dwellings of man. Who refuses the mute appeal of the pretty little feathered mendicant, as in its dauntless distress it almost enters our breakfast parlour? but the innocent audacity that interests us in the little bird, is called "impudent assurance" in a fellow-creature, and the heart that would bleed to injure a feather of the red-breast, does not hesitate to slam the door in the pinched face of the poor starving match-seller, whom want has nerved to the desperate deed of knocking at it. This poor woman, after trembling for an hour or two in a thin scanty cotton covering by a cross way, and unable to attract the attention of the warm-clad passenger as he hurried home out of the keen cutting air, despairing, too, of a casual customer, and unwilling to return empty handed, it may be to a quenched hearth or a sick child, glanced round in doubt at the adjacent dwellings, and after looking for a while wistfully at the cheerful reflection of my fire, through the red merino window curtains, timidly thought of trying what chance of charity there was from one seemingly so warmly lodged and well favoured with the world's comforts. Poor woman! her reception was such as not to allow her to be again easily drawn away from her crossway, by the "tempting aspect" of my house at least.

"Free seats for ever!" thought I, as I entered Fishponds Church, and saw nearly the whole area of that edifice devoted to the poor and the stranger. It is capable of containing between seven and eight hundred

and there are out of that nearly six hundred unappropriated sittings. Indeed, I could only count about sixteen pews, which, being placed closely together, at the east end, accommodated the *elite* of Fishponds—yes, elite, for, poor as Fishponds is, it cannot be without its *elite*. The rest of the building is occupied by the non-elite of the place, and the pauper children and old women of Stapleton workhouse. It was one of the simplest and humblest congregations (with the exception of the sixteen pews) I have ever seen. I sat on a form with several old women, and paid as much attention to the service as two or three hundred children with colds in their heads would permit me to do. Pocket-handkerchiefs, I perceive, are not provided under the Gilbert Union Act; but I think at this inclement season they are indispensable: most of them being foundlings, caught cold on the first night of their exposure, and have never since recovered from it: I should, therefore, suggest a sermon on behalf of an instant supply—an appeal to which the interns of the sixteen pews afore-said ought to liberally respond for their own sakes. The cold, however, did not keep the young urchins from singing, for, on the psalms being given out, an invisible violoncello* in the gallery squeaked the key note, and they commenced with good will, and, considering the rude materials of the choir, got through with credit. Though nearly all the children sang with more or less effect, I noticed that the chief vocalists were arranged in two equal lines in front, these files only being furnished with Prayer Books.

As I found it the case in most country churches which I have visited, the congregation turned round to

* I could only see the hand and cuff of the performer, who was wisely thrust out of view. The epitaph of one Phillips, in the porch of Wolverhampton Church, records that his "absolute contempt of riches, and inimitable performance upon the violin, made him the admiration of all who knew him:" judging from the state of that portion of his garment which I saw, the "chief musician" of Fishponds might come under the first clause of commendation; it is for others of more experience in the "catgut choir" to say whether he merited the second.

loll and listen ; so that half the audience, namely, the children, were looking eastward, while the other half, by confronting them, had quite an opposite aspect. Not to be singular, I did the same as my neighbours, and had, therefore, an opportunity of examining the various lineaments of the little boys and girls—the latter in their grey freize cloaks, and the former in jackets of a like material—and I think I never saw such an epitome of the human face in all its diversity of features: eyes of all colours, noses of all shapes, hair of all hues—some would be well-looking, others threatened to be positively ugly—some showed intellect, some evidence of obdurate stolidity—some promised to be agreeable, others were already repulsive. I believe the principal portion of them are foundlings, or illegitimate children ; and, I confess, I could not help looking at them with some interest, and conjecturing how many of them had been found tied to knockers, how many packed in linen parcels by hall-doors, how many picked up by policemen on their beats, how many remitted in baskets by rail, and how many found with recommendatory letters tied with silk threads round their necks. I looked upon each little *enfant trouve* as a walking duodecimo edition of romance, if one could read it, with its secret tale of sin and suffering. There were few of them but might have turned out a Tom Jones in the hands of another Fielding.

Fishponds is a “plain and unaccommodated” place of worship ; there is no sexton ; no robing-room ; the Rev. W. Mirehouse changed his surplice for his gown in the reading-desk, and opened the pulpit-door, and performed other little minutiae for himself. He had hardly given out the text—the 4th verse of the 144th Psalm, “Man is like to vanity ; his days are as a shadow that passeth away”—when two or three old gentlemen immediately commenced muffling themselves up with much assiduity, buttoning their great coats, pulling on their gloves, and making such other preparations, seemingly for a long sermon, that I began to

grow apprehensive. But it was not a long sermon ; and I do not know when I have heard a much better one ; some parts of it were positively eloquent ; and the pervading characteristics of his style were forcible and figurative. His manner, however, was more open to exception than his matter : it was free, and at times far from ungraceful ; but it was for the most part infinitely more magisterial than ministerial, and accompanied with a tone and look so authoritative that you would have thought he was reading malefactors a moral lesson from the bench of Lawford Gate, instead of addressing a congregation from the pulpit of Fishponds. One almost expected that he would conclude his discourse by declaring, " If you don't do as I tell you, I'll commit you for three months." There was a dogmatic shake of the head, too, and his voice, though modulated to meet other feelings, never sunk to the softness of affectionate admonition ; and, as he thrust his hands into his pockets and throwing himself back against the board behind him, looked his audience full in the face, and, addressing them with the directness of Nathan, told them that every moment was, as it were, a messenger from another world come for their commands and taking back what they had to give, never returning to afford them an opportunity of recall ; though I could not help being struck with the unfettered ease and energy of his action, I could never for a moment in my mind separate the justice of the peace from the parson.

The Church is a plain, poor structure, naked both within and without : but it serves the great purpose for which it was built, and compared with which architectural orders and adornments are but as dust in the balance—namely, to afford spiritual accommodation for a large and populous district ; and it is peculiarly gratifying to find that the wants of the poor have been the first consideration in the structure. It was built within the last twenty or thirty years, and consists of a nave and small chancel : there is some stained glass

in the east window, through which the cold white light of winter entered with a little prismatic warmth. At the east end is a gallery, inhabited by the children of the charity-school, and the invisible violoncello player before referred to.

The churchyard seems to be almost wholly used as a Golgotha for the neighbouring poorhouse, as the long ranks of little red clay-mounds, with a small inscribed footstone to each, indicated. I seldom saw a more desolate and cheerless-looking resting-place for the dead in my life; not a shrub or altar-tomb, that I could see, rose to vary the dismal and monotonous dreariness and flatness of the place. I walked round it after service, and there were two old women standing by a patch of newly-broken earth, which had lately received some mortal remains; though little was the care devoted to other graves, this had evidently received less. The two old women were whispering mysteriously as they stood by it.

"Whose grave is this, my good folks?" said I.

"The poor young woman who was buried at midnight, without prayer said for her poor soul," said the elder of the two, slightly shuddering.

"Yes," added her companion, "and they might have found 'tempry sanity' for this poor wildered creature as well as for another."

My curiosity was excited, and seeing it was an incident one does not every day meet with in a country-churchyard, I begged they would tell me all about it, which was, as well as I could gather from them, to the following effect. It was, in fact, a rude version of a rustic Ophelia's story. It appears that her name was Esther Tilly: she was the daughter of a farmer living in the adjoining parish, or somewhere on the borders of Horfield and Stapleton, and having fallen in love with a young man, a kind of farm-servant named Williams, her father forbade her the house, and she went to reside with a relative, still continuing her love, "not wisely but too well," for the young man Williams:

some flaw, however, some trifling interruption to their mutual attachment took place, which, joined perhaps to her other troubles, had the effect of "driving her to desperate terms," and one evening, after writing a letter informing her lover of her determination, she proceeded to a little pond in her parent's orchard, and throwing herself in, she was seen by some one at a distance to float for a moment, until

" Her garments heavy with their drink,
Pulled the poor wretch
To muddy death."

An inquest was held, and the jury, arguing I suppose according to the clown's logic, "If I drown myself wittingly it argues an act, and an act has three branches—it is to act, to do, to perform; argal, she drowned herself wittingly," found a verdict of *felo de se*, and the body was buried that same night by torchlight, between the hours of 11 and 12 o'clock, without the solemn rite of Christian sepulture, and with all the haste that accompanies a hurried work of horror, beneath the broken earth by which we then stood. But it was not in their end alone that the story of the poor country girl and the "pretty Ophelia" agreed: their burial was marked by a singularly similar incident, for, on the body being lowered into the ground, the young man, Williams, bursting through the circle of torch-bearers, threw himself on it in the frenzy of his feelings* reminding one of a similar act of the excited Hamlet at the grave of Ophelia—

" Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in my arms."

The story appeared to me a peculiarly sad one; and I confess I could not help wishing with the old woman that the jury had charitably interpreted the act as one

* We recollect the case, and our venerable friend is nearly, but not quite correct in the particulars: the report said, that so excited with grief was Williams that he could with difficulty be prevented by the bystanders from throwing himself into the grave above the body.—E. B. T.

of *temporary insanity*. In the case of a fine lady some would not have as summarily decided on the state of her mind: and I think with the clown that "great folks should not have countenance in this world to drown and hang themselves any more than their even Christian;" and it would have lessened the horror of a sad tale had Hope, like a charitable angel, been allowed to hover over the unhappy remains.

"They threw quick lime too, into the grave," said the old woman, seeing me gaze down on the rough red cheerless-looking earth at my feet; "and cast her body in as if she were a dog or a *particide* (parricide), instead of a poor distraught girl."

I said nothing but turned away, for the cold began to creep up my legs; the cutting blast came across the bleak churchyard, and, whistling through the loose stones of the ill-built wall close by, piped an appropriate dirge above the grave of the poor suicide.

Chornbury.

AMONGST the various luxuries of this festive season within the borough of Bristol, one cannot conscientiously number that of sleep. From 8 p.m. on Christmas eve, to

“That hour o’ night’s black arch the key-stane.”

called commonly in prose, 12 o’clock, I was regaled with a succession of “Glories shone around” from a number of small voices at my door; and when these ceased, a trombone, a clarionet, and first fiddle, appeared to

“Make night hideous: and we fools of nature
Most horribly to shake our dispositions.”

With two o’clock and the last cadence of “Auld lang syne,” I fell asleep, and awoke at eight. On descending to breakfast my landlady presented me with the compliments of the season and a plate of muffins; both (poor soul!) a little over buttered.

Henri Quatre could not think France happy till every peasant had a fowl in his pot. Whether it was through a feeling allied to that of the illustrious monarch, namely, a wish to provide feathered food for their friends, I cannot say, but all the way between Bristol and Filton was lined with fowlers—shop-boys, for the most part, who, furnished with fusees, dealt destruction round them in the most independent style imaginable, and scared both John Runyan and his rider out of their “seven senses.” John, for the first time since I had the happiness to make his acquaintance, acted in a manner unworthy his sober and sedate character, and jumped from side to side at every pop,

perilling my personal safety and his own too. It was in vain I assured him that it was an immemorial practice amongst the 'prentice boys of Bristol on Christmas morning to kill the time and small birds before breakfast, and that the detonations which he heard were the result of this ancient practice: John still bounded about at every report, and, sooth to say, I was hardly more easy in mind than my respected quadruped; for, independent of the danger arising from his fitful agility, I felt I was exposed to another still more imminent, from the fusilade of my young friends, who fired into the bushes with the most superlative indifference as to the parties who became the recipients of their spare shot; for, upon one occasion, the spent lead that brought down a blackbird in its career, fell in a shower, fortunately not fatal, near my horse's feet.

Were I not in a hurry, I should have been disposed to loiter on Almondsbury-hill, which overlooks so noble a prospect, with the broad waters of the Severn bounding the view; but the bells beginning to ring in the old and picturesque little church, with its lead-covered spire, in the hollow, told me I had no time to lose; so I pushed on without pause to the Ship at Alveston. Here, for the first time, I got a peep of the fair church-tower of Thornbury, with its beautiful ballustraded top; but as I looked down on the "old burgh," with its old houses snugly nestling amongst old trees, no sound reached me, no bells boomed out their Christmas peals, and I began to think I had arrived too late, not only for the procession, but prayers. What, thought I, after riding twelve miles to see them, have they presumed to march to church without my being there to see. I pushed John to a more energetic walk than usual, and as I pulled up at the Swan porch, the first question I asked of my landlady, who promptly made her appearance, was, "If prayers had commenced."

"No, Sir," said she, "they do not commence to-day until half-past eleven, on account of the Mayor; the usual time is eleven."

Now the reader, from sundry invitations sent me, may possibly by this time be acquainted with the cause of delay. It appears that Thornbury (proud place) has a Mayor and Corporation, and the principal and almost only duty which the great civic functionary has to perform during his year of office, is to provide coffee for his co-councilmen and the incumbent of the parish, at his residence on Christmas morning; and, having discussed that and a quantity of hot rolls, to walk, preceded by some poor men and women, through the town to church. In consideration of the Mocha and munchets the service is accordingly delayed, as we have already seen half an hour. It never struck their worships—it never occurred to the incumbent, that by beginning their breakfast 30 minutes sooner, the parishioners who have not the good fortune to partake of cake and coffee at the Mayor's expense, need not be obliged to postpone their dinners half an hour, to say nothing of the very secondary position in which it places the celebration of the solemn service of the church.

But it was more than half an hour, for I stood with my back against the wooden column of the Swan porch, still waiting the apparition of the civic procession, some minutes after the hands of the Town-hall clock pointed to half-past eleven; and I began to think that his Worship had added a *demitasse* of ratafie to his *dejeuner*, when a person who happened to come up at the time, and of whom I made some enquiries, assured me this could not be the case, as the Mayor was an impregnable teetotaller.

At length a rush of little boys in red noses announced that a movement of that momentous body, the Mayor and Corporation of Thornbury, had taken place, and that the functionaries had really finished their breakfast. First came a file of old women, in gowns, aprons, and bonnets alike; then a string of elderly men, in brown coats, with very bright buttons (the Corporation of Thornbury wish their good deeds to *shine* before men), and black hats with very broad brims, the gift of the

Corporation, the recipients being left to find inexpressibles for themselves. The ancient Romans showed their glory by the line of captives that followed their calvacades; the Corporation of Thornbury display their charity by the number of paupers that precede their procession. They are not the people (bless their hearts) to

“Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame.”

People may call your worships “Pharisaical functionaries,” but depend upon it there’s nothing like letting all the world know your benevolence: once commence the silent system of almsgiving, and half the close-fisted fellows in the country will take credit to themselves for the acts of charity done by others in secret, and the public will be cheated out of its compassion by moral swindlers. The poor past, two tall staff-men swaggered on in front of the civic party, and then came the Mayor, in a broad brimmed hat, a black surtout, and a brown cotton umbrella, having the Rev. Townsend Stephens, canonically clad, on his right, and a detachment of brother aldermen filling up the rear. They were a good-humoured, good-natured, good-looking set of gentlemen, and as they wiped their mouths after the Mayor’s muffins, none could seem more happy or contented: but they were piteously shorn of their pomp—no state carriage, no gold chain and silver gown, no insignia or precious metal, unless indeed a decent sized silver mace (I forgot the mace), and a white wand (which I also neglected to enumerate).

I don’t know what there was remarkable or worthy of remark in my contour or brown coat; but as the procession passed the Swan, they all, including his Worship and his Reverence, stared at me as if I had two heads, and there was a whispering and seeming consultation amongst them, which I fondly put down for a friendly contest between the Mayor and the Rev. Townsend Stephens, as to which should have the pleasure of asking me that day to dinner. Here, however, I was mistaken, for, independent of a piece of

Glo'ster and a brown loaf,—but of this by-and-bye. I followed the procession, and had the inexpressible delight of hearing two fellows in fustian jackets (I pledge my word for the fact) exclaim as they crushed by me in the crowd, "The Church-Goer is in town." Talk of celebrity—that's what I call glory—to find that one's reputation, one's title and likeness had travelled twelve miles from Bristol, and that the very bumpkins in the street syllabled my name, "Take heart, old gentleman," said I, striking the breast of my brown coat encouragingly, "*Non omnis moriar*—let the Duke of Wellington look to his laurels, I'm blest if I don't have a bay or two to my own brows." I felt myself growing, expanding—my snuff-colour seemed suddenly to become too small for me, and I let out a button or two to prevent a catastrophe—"You old goose," said common sense immediately after, "what! grow vain at your time of life—nobody ever recollected you yet at half-past ten on a Saturday morning."

My moral reflections brought me and the procession to the churchyard, and I leaned over the wall to look at the little cortege as it wound up the gravel walk. There was one poor man amongst the recipients of the brown coats (was the colour selected in compliment to me, Mr. Mayor?) who had some affection of the legs, and as he toiled along, a prominent and somewhat painful object in the affair, I felt disposed to regret that the civic body should have thought it necessary for their pity-moving purposes to exhibit him in the procession.

Spirit of Handel, what a crash! Before I had crushed my person within the porch, and while the black surtout and brown cotton umbrella of his Worship were still in view, I was literally overwhelmed with a dashing voluntary: such as the organist only plays once a year when the Mayor gives coffee and muffins to the Minister, cloaks to the poor, and winds up his good works by walking to church. It was a voluntary, indeed, given with all his will, and full of fugues, and canons, and quavers, and other fantastical flights, which

seemed to skip with a sort of solemn frolic, and hant each other with a kind of musical glee up to the old oak roof, through the middle and side aisles, and around the monuments and holly bushes with which the church was full and forest-like, until at length eddying in combined echoes about the civic pew they seemed to riot in extatic joy. But great as the voluntary was, the "*Gloria*" which immediately followed left it far behind in *eclat*. Ranged full in front of the gallery the singers exerted all their powers to equal if possible the occasion: in the centre was the conductor, with a roll of paper in his hand, and Mendelsshon could not have wielded his baton with half the dignity of my friend (for I will call him my friend); he was keeping common time it is true, but in "uncommon" grand style: with each bar "the down beat" descended on the book before him with a sound which was heard by and above the whole choir, although the principal bass was so deep that he seemed to sing down his cravat—the trebles left nothing to be desired in their quarter, and if I neglected to say the tenors did their duty, I should not be doing mine. Nor was the organist disposed to lose his share of the day's credit: no man could be more industrious, and were it not for an indescribable idea of extreme labour, arduous toil, and intense exertion which the entire conveyed, I question if I could too rapturously express my gratification at all I saw and heard. As it was, the congregation I could perceive were delighted, and the very evergreens around, as they bowed their branches, appeared to concur in the general opinion of approval. A little fellow near me, who was perfectly entranced, looked me full in the face whenever a passage more forte than usual occurred, as much as to say—so at least I read his looks—"Well, you have heard a pretty considerable quantity of music in your lifetime, old gentleman, but did you ever hear anything like that?" I don't think I did—the effort was a most praiseworthy one: the only fault I had to find was, we saw rather too much. I suppose the man

with the baton would revolt if we put him out of sight; but I confess, picturesque an object as he is, I'd be disposed to place a red curtain in front of him and his roll of papers. One must not quarrel with this display at Christmas; but, as a general principle, I'd prefer a simple psalm, in which all might join, to such laborious affairs. I have heard once of a hard-headed countryman, who, when taken for the first time to a cathedral, turned round to his friend when a grand piece was finished, and said, with a sort of severe simplicity, "Do you call this praising God?" An ill-natured person might be disposed to repeat the question after some of our occasional country church exhibitions. But these performances, in my opinion, if not too many, are rather a subject of congratulation: they argue a creditable pride on the part of the parishioners and parish authorities of the church, and prove that neglect and indifference do not characterise the congregation. All present, I thought seemed pleased with themselves, their choir, and their beautiful pile; and even the incumbent looked around as if he would say, "At this particular moment I don't envy His Grace Dr. Howley, Archbishop of Canterbury."

The church was well filled—I might almost say crowded; but I dare say this was a Christmas-day congregation, for I actually overheard one young girl say as she left the church, that she had not been there since the previous Christmas-day: I have no doubt, however, she was a dissenter. I found my way into a pew near the door, where there were two young men, who did not behave themselves particularly well; and a dreadful draught that gave me a cold, from the effects of which at this present writing, I am suffering in my head and shoulders.

I think Thornbury one of the handsomest country churches I have ever seen; it has quite an imposing cathedral-like appearance. It has two side and a noble centre aisle, the latter lit with a fine and lofty row of clerestory windows. The arches which divide the

north and south from the principal aisle are of great symmetrical elegance, springing from clustered columns of graceful lightness. The chancel does not at present look to the best advantage, owing to the east window being stopped up: it ought to be opened. The stone pulpit is worthy the edifice, and in style, construction, &c., shows the good taste of the period in which it was placed there. There is a great waste of wood in the pews, inasmuch as they are once and a half too high; but, on the whole, the Vandalism of the 17th and 18th centuries have done less to disfigure this building than almost any other country church I have seen. The tower—which though light is richly elaborated—is only second, perhaps, to St. Stephen's; and, in some points, especially the open battlemented work at top, there is a resemblance between them. If the organ could be placed anywhere else (though I do not see how it could) that end of the church would be very much improved, and a handsome west window exposed to view. Indeed I could not help thinking how much more imposing the whole edifice would be, if the west entrance were opened, and the east windows also; the fine proportions and manifold beauties of the structure might then be seen at a glance. The nave, body, and tower were built by Fitz Hardinge; the south aisle, which differs slightly in character from the rest, by Hugh, Earl Stafford (about the time of Richard II.), who died at Rhodes, on his return from what some graceless writers have called a fool's errand, namely, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The north aisle is, I think, private property; the whole is dedicated to the Virgin Mary. There are several monuments, ancient and modern, about the building; but I was crushed out before I had time to examine them with anything like minuteness. There is an ancient tomb to one of the Tindals, erected in the latter end of the 16th century, in the great chancel: I say great chancel, but I hardly know whether to call those parts of the building at the east end of the side aisles, chancels, or transepts: somebody called them

cross aisles to me. There are also monuments to several of the Staffords, male and female. The churchyard, like most country churchyards, and Mrs. Malapropos in the *Rivals*, may be noticed for a "nice derangement of its epitaphs."

Having said so much about the church, I have left myself room to say little about the clergyman. But, first, a word with the congregation: I could not expect them to take a share in the anthem, and I object to anthems, because none but the inhabitants of the organ loft can join in them; but there was nothing that I could see but their own hearts and wills to prevent them taking share in the responses, which, however, they did not do, leaving it all to the clerk. And, another thing, they seemed to come into church at all times, and there were fresh arrivals until after the litany. I never heard, and I don't recollect ever seeing, the Rev. Townsend Stephens before in my life, so that my opinion is only worth one day's experience. I hardly remember ever hearing a better reader; and his sermon, from Luke ii., 10, "And the Angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people," he delivered in a distinct and sonorous voice, and with a clearness and correctness of enunciation which must have made the discourse plain and distinct to every one within the church. He had other advantages, too, which are seldom thrown away, even amongst more Evangelical ministers and hearers—a good head and shoulders, and he stood something like six feet; honest measure, in his shoes. His sermon, whether a holiday one or not, was a good one; and, on the whole, in pulpit and reading desk, the Rev. Townsend Stephens may take a very respectable stand amongst country parsons; and now you have the whole of my knowledge of the Vicar of Thornbury. I say this because I need not tell the reader, nor the Rev. Townsend Stephens either, that what a clergyman is in the pulpit and reading desk is a very small portion of what a clergyman ought to be:

I must be able to trace him from house to house and from cottage to cottage during the other six days of the week, seconding by precept and example his Sunday sermon; labouring, nay toiling, in the sacred, aye and awful service upon which he has entered; for pleasant as the rural parsonage, with its rose-grown trellised front, may seem, there is a fearful responsibility and condition attached to its tenure, namely, the care of many hundred souls,—the Tithe Commutation Act is not the only knowledge necessary to the man that enters on such a charge. I make these observations in a general way: I know nothing about the Vicar of Thornbury beyond what I saw and heard of him on Christmas-day, and what a man told me on the road, that personally he was exceedingly popular amongst his parishioners.

The reader is perhaps aware that the people of Thornbury had been pestering me with invitations for the last three months, and I was promised innumerable dinners both in poetry and prose: the former is generally founded on fiction, and the latter, I am sorry to say, had not a more substantial basis in the present instance. You'd have thought (I certainly did) from the pressing epistles that reached me, that a hundred families at least were burning for the honour of having my legs under their mahogany, and that the sound of John's hoofs would hardly be heard in the street before as many hatless heads of houses were seen running out to lay hold of his bridle and hands on each other, in fierce contest for the pleasure of providing entertainment for man and horse. Nevertheless, I declare to you, good reader (though you will hardly believe it), that from the time I passed the first house on my entrance until I arrived at the Swan, I was not accosted by a single creature who had even a luncheon in his looks: and then, as I was leaving the church after prayers, there was not one friendly hand (though I walked slow to afford them an opportunity) to touch me on the shoulder and say, "A roast rib and plum-pudding precisely at two." Where, may I ask, was the poet, and

where the old gentleman abounding in latin and fine professions, who was to meet me at the Ship at Alveston—where the Mayor—where the Corporation, where the Churchwardens, where even the Rev. Townsend Stephens; *he* could not have left the church quite so promptly but he could have leant over the pulpit and said to the clerk, “see that old gentleman (I know he saw me) in the snuff-coloured coat going out of the porch: run after him and tell him my turkey will bear one moderate appetite more.” But no such thing; I reached the Swan without the hospitality of the town offering the slightest interruption to my progress.

“Some luncheon, lady mine,” said I, bustling into the warm bar (there was no fire in the “coffee-room”). A kind soul is mine hostess of the Swan. “Do stay and dine with us, Sir,” said she, with the most good-natured *empressement*. Thank Heaven, thought I, there is one hospitable heart in Thornbury (mind I have said nothing about a certain doomed city and a single just man); but stay I could not—I would not. Dine at an hotel on Christmas-day! that in my opinion was the acme of destitution; so I had some good brown bread, cheese, butter, and general gossip by the bar-fire with my excellent friend Mrs. —, she’ll excuse me, but I really forget her name, or rather I never knew it. Reader, if ever you visit the Swan, there’s a wooden arm-chair in the bar, with a high back, I sat in that—respect it; and look at a large slate some four feet square behind the door; it is a monstrous piece of antiquity, and did good service before drib and day-books were invented. There are some “old scores” on it still, which mine hostess said she feared would never be paid. Under her guidance I made a visit to the Sessions-room, which is attached to the house, and where the local magistrates dispense infinitesimal doses of law and justice to a grateful public. It contained at the time an immense new Swan, carved out in wood—quite a *Rara Avis* I can assure you, and which my enterprising hostess informed me was in a few days to

surmount the vestibule of her hostelry, to which the "silver cygnet," I need not tell the reader, attaches a title. I expect there will be quite a sensation in Thornbury on the day of its elevation.

John Bunyan is at the door, but before I go, a word about the Castle. I suppose every body knows its history, and I have more to do with Church than Castle building. It was begun in the reign of Henry the VIII. by Edward Duke of Buckingham, but never completed, as that poor gentleman lost his head because he did not know how to keep a civil tongue in it. "He was very hot and indiscreet," says the historian, "in many of his expressions, which created a jealousy in King Henry the Eighth; for which cause he was tried by his own peers upon an accusation of high treason, and found guilty." The principal witness against him was Charles Knevet, whom he had discharged from his service at the clamour of his tenants; but the real cause of his condemnation was his haughty spirit and contemptuous slight of the powerful Cardinal Wolsey. To relate the particular incident which led to the cutting off his Grace's head and the cutting short the Castle of Thornbury, would be only telling a school boy's tale: nevertheless, at the risk of being "thanked for nothing," here it is: the Duke was presenting the basin after dinner on his knees, for the king to wash his hands, and when his Majesty had completed his ablutions and turned away, Wolsey (t'was like his impudence) dipped his hand in the water while Buckingham was yet kneeling: the blood of Stafford rose at this, and with it rose Stafford also, and as the readiest way of resenting the affront, poured the water into Wolsey's shoes; but whether the Cardinal caught cold in his feet or not from the incident, the historian doth not say, but the proud priest evidently did not relish the water system, for he threatened to "sit on the Duke's skirts." Stafford did not let the joke rest here, but next day came to court without skirts to his doublet, and on being asked the reason by the King, answered

it was to avoid the Cardinal's anger, who had threatened to sit upon his skirts. "The Duke had his jest," quaintly observes Sir Thomas Atkyns, "but the Cardinal had his head"—rather too high a price at which to purchase a joke, I should say myself. The

" Bounteous Buckingham,
The mirror of all courtesy,"

(as Shakespeare calls him) deserved a better fate, if it were only for the good taste he displayed in the plan of Thornbury Castle.

It is a curious statistical fact that as I left the town there was not a single creature that I could see in the streets; all but the poor Church-Goer were within doors, wrapped in the blandishments of roast beef and plum pudding: nevertheless (here's an act of mercy) I forgive thee, Thornbury.

Westbury-on-Trym.

My acquaintance with Westbury is of long standing. My worthy father, who resided in a close and crowded part of Bristol, and was confined by the situation which he held amongst the "cribbed and cabined" habitations of man during six days of the week, almost invariably in summer used to walk out to morning service in some of the neighbouring country churches, and on these occasions he took either me or my poor brother with him. My mother used to say it was not right for the head of the family to be absent so much from his own parish church, but he always answered that he never was in a more happy and devotional feeling or a more cheerful frame of mind to enter a church porch, than after he had walked two or three miles through a beautiful country, in the morning sunshine and amongst singing birds. My mother and my sisters, who always attended in their parish church; seeing it was useless to oppose his innocent hobby, at length abstained altogether from expostulation, which was never very urgent, and my excellent parent continued his summer morning walks as long as he could walk, and I verily believe I inherit my roving propensities from him. The Italians literally and ludicrously translated Dr. Johnson's "Rambler" *Il Vagabondo*, and I suppose father and son might come under a mitigated application of the term. Westbury was amongst his most favourite excursions, and I can fancy I still see the hale and hearty old man (I wish he had transmitted his health with his habits to me), as, like the boy Ascanius with Father Æneas, hand in hand

I trotted on by his side, *haud passibus æquis*, across the Down, while the echoes of Westbury and Bristol bells were meeting mid-way, as it were, with their noisy salutations. "Come, boy," he'd say, after loitering a minute or so to look with pleasure in every lineament on the Channel, "marking the embarked traders on the flood:" "Come, come, step out, or we'll be too late;" and then he'd take out his old silver watch, "the same which now I wear," and which still retains within its capacious cases the same piece of silk with the motto of "Fear God, honor the King," which had been embroidered by my mother for him when they were courting. And familiar, too, to me is the first peep of the church on turning the hill, when

"Tower and battlement one sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees."

My father, who was as well known almost as any of his parishioners to the Incumbent, used to receive the Sacrament frequently at Westbury, and while he remained in for that part of the service I was allowed to ramble about the churchyard, and I recollect regarding Ruddle's tomb with a sort of awful dread, no doubt occasioned by the story of his murder. There was also another tale of horror with which my young blood used to be frozen, about the ghost of Pen Park Hole, which frightened Captain Sturmy out of his wits and life, and which I used to hear at an old farmer friend's in the neighbourhood, whom we visited in our rural rambles. But goblin stories are gone out of fashion now, and the respectable old-fashioned ghost, who inhabited old ivy-gabled churchyards, after frightening generations of rustics has itself been frightened away by the railroad whistle.

As I rode under the high wall of Westbury Convent, on Sunday, the —— of ——, I could not help muttering to myself with Theseus

"You can endure the livery of a nun,
For aye to be in shady cloister mewed,
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon."

Between us and what a world of fancied mystery does such a wall seem to interpose ! As I passed there was a comfortable looking gentleman, doubtless a Roman Catholic priest, entering at the gateway, and such was my curiosity I should have willingly given my saddle and bridle, to be allowed to enter with him, and have a walk through those

“ Cells,
Where heavenly pensive contemplation dwells,”

and a quiet dish of gossip with the superior. What a curious effect has a lofty piece of masonry on one : if that wall were down, and a line of open iron railing occupied its place, I should not have felt so ardent a desire for admission to the interior : but *omne ignotum pro magnifico* : such an impassable, not-to-be-peeped-over a barrier, though it shuts out everything else, opens a field for a world of speculation—makes one imagine all manner of beauties in black gowns and white veils, each with a history as long and interesting as a three-volume novel of Colburn and Bentley’s publishing. A common place notice of any of those picturesque virgins is quite out of the question—nothing short of blighted love and implacable parents could have brought one of them within its boundaries : then there is the vesper bell, and the matin bell, and the midnight chaunting, and the morning hymn, and a hundred other imposing associations which make poetry and Popery almost synonymous, and furnish romance writers with half their stock-in-trade. Yet I have no doubt that, if some day my friend the Abbe O’Farrall were to take me under his arm and protection, and introduce my heretical snuff-coloured coat within such orthodox precincts, I should perceive a large share of that influence and atmosphere which belongs to flesh and blood pervading the place, and find that some portion of the old world feeling had crept over its walls ; and perhaps be shocked to see their “ maiden meditations ” suspended for the moment by the physical attractions of a leg of mutton and trimmings, or the

Mother Abbess engaged in a game of cribbage with the next in authority. And yet I think the original idea of a convent was not altogether without good, and we must recollect it was not wholly unknown to the early Christian church, for I fancy St. Ambrose was a stickler for something like the institution. I know that the most beautiful and beneficent sphere for female charity and kindness is the broad world, whose social asperities but for them would be unendurable; but there are sensitive and shrinking natures, who recoil as it were from rude contact with it, but who, if supported by combination with the good and pious of their own sex, might turn their means and personal exertions to the mitigation of misery and the advancement of religion: I do not mean, of course, that they should be mewed up as in the conventual establishments of the Romish church, but in that friendly and affectionate association which would enable them to act in concert and with effect against the woes and vices abroad in the world. This is a mere opinion—a fancy of mine, fair reader: but don't be afraid, I do not tempt you to celibacy, and the surrender of your fortunes, properties, and hereditaments. You may be of more use as wives and mothers; but if you can't be of use as wives and mothers, you may be of more use, I fancy, thus associated than single.

As I entered the little turnstile to the churchyard the bell ceased, and before I had crossed "God's acre," as our Saxon forefathers called the burying-ground, I saw four or five rough looking fellows hurrying out of the porch and putting on their hats as they did so: the haste with which they ran from the sacred building, jumping over graves and tombstones, as if they would not be detained a moment longer than they could possibly help in the neighbourhood of the "House of Prayer," attracted my notice, and I soon perceived they were the ringers. These fellows verify more than any other class I know the adage "the nearer the Church, the farther from Heaven." As the organ

pealed after them and seemed to call them back with swelling and solemn voice, they did not even turn round. I'd almost have forgiven them if they had cast one hesitating look behind them: but no—away they went, running and leaping all the way down to the now silent village, perhaps to a skittle alley or beer house. And yet if there be any "hempen homespuns" who ought to feel a touch of sentiment, or at least sensibility, it is these bell ringers. Their very occupation is full of poetry, and ought to partake of religion; their's is no every day handicraft—antiquity, which softens every thing, seems to hallow the avocation, and they never pull the ropes that they do not awaken the voice of other days—the voice that spoke to centuries ago and generations past. The insensate clods! the very vicissitudes of death and marriage, which they are called on to signal or celebrate, ought to touch their natures, if the solemn beauty of the Sabbath peal had become too much a matter of course to have any influence upon them. Amongst other modes of seeing in the new year, I have one which is somewhat peculiar perhaps to myself: for a slight consideration I am allowed by the ringers to accompany them to the belfry to see out the old and in the new year: and on Tuesday week, about a quarter of an hour before midnight, I met my friends by appointment at the porch of a certain church in the city, which for the present shall be nameless. The lanthorn which the tenor carried up the "spiral staircase, narrow and damp," shed a sort of sickly, almost sepulchral flicker on the winding steps and dark wall, and threw just enough of light on the rough faces that followed, to make them look as if they came from another world. On arriving at the belfry the ringers took off their coats, and each laid hold of a pendant rope, and, in a moment more, a peal, solemn and dirge-like, sounded upon the ears of the hundreds who, in their surrounding houses, were watching to see '44 out, and sent the "knell" not of a "departing hour," but a "departing year," through

the mists of passion and of sense" that arose from a crowded, a careless, and a careworn city. It ceased—the conductor held an old silver watch in his hand, and I took mine out of my pocket: it was within a minute or two of twelve, and not a sound was heard but the breathing of the ringers as they paused from their work. That minute was the most eloquent silence I ever *heard*—a thousand sermons preached from the pulpit below in the church, could not have touched the heart like that minute's silence in the tower. As the second hand ticked, ticked round its little circle, the last pulsations of the dying year, I looked upon the little group of faces, upon which the lanthorn shed its light: the men stood statue-like with the ropes in their hands—I glanced back upon the dial of my watch, two seconds more, and the little hand was on the hair-line which divided '44 and '5. I fancied—it was a mere fancy—that the shadowy form of the old year as it departed to its brethren "beyond the flood," glided by us at that solemn moment. I thought of Job's vision, "Then the spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof, an image was before mine eyes. There was silence, and I heard a voice saying, * * * *They are destroyed from morning to evening, they perish for ever without any regarding it.*" While I was yet occupied with the thought the bells swung round a welcome, more boisterous and wild I thought than merry, to the new year. Aye, here it comes in, thought I, as with the last drop of the ebb begins the flow; but God only knows, as the dim tide comes flowing up to us from futurity, what events it bears upon its surface, and over what ruined hopes and wrecked happiness its surges will roll. Millions will pass from amongst us during the twelvemonths we have now ushered in with such a clamorous peal, and yet of these doomed millions not one person seriously believes that he will die. His relative or his neighbour may die, but he is not to die; there is nothing in which we willingly give precedence

to other people but in death. "After you, Sir," is the comfortable feeling, if not the complaisant expression in all these matters. In my own mind I was at that moment verifying the truth of my own thoughts, for while I was thus reflecting *for others*, I never once fancied that I ought to think for myself. "And you, smooth old gentlemen in the snuff-coloured coat," some monitory spirit seemed to whisper in my ear—"have you ever dreamt there is the slightest—we'll say the *slightest* possibility of your being one of the unconscious millions for whose coffin the oak planks are now seasoning?" "Certainly not," thought I; "no, no; I am going to live, of course, and write Church-Goers for years to come. No, no, no; what could have brought that uncomfortable thought across my mind?—We'll change the subject." But the subject would not change for me: it stuck like a barbed arrow, and fastened on me until I began to fancy it a presentiment. The chimes were in their last merry strokes for the new year, but there was a thought pealing in my mind above them all; and as we descended the little spiral staircase, our business done, it was strange that the toll for the old year was more vividly in my recollection than the welcome for the new; and as I picked my way down the narrow stone steps, I felt I had gained by my midnight visit to the belfry

"Much that might give me pause, if pondered fittingly."

A trifle, however, will sometimes turn us from our best thoughts; and mine were endangered by one of the ringers who preceeded me calling out to another behind, in a voice which had a hollow echo in the old tower, "Bill, I'll have a drop o' beer to begin the new year with: what sayest thee?" "I don't care," answered his companion, "if the old gent. 'll stand treat." "Begin the new year with a muddle!—the old gentleman will do no such thing," I replied.

Westbury Church formed at one time part of a collegiate establishment, consisting of a dean and five canons William Cannyngs—a name illustrious in our annals,

and associated so intimately with the noble pile of St. Mary's, Redcliff—was Dean of Westbury in the 15th century, having taken holy orders after filling the civic chair of Bristol five times : a precedent which, I believe, has not been followed by any of his successors, though it was a notable, if not very usual wind up, I confess, to the chief magistracy. We don't hear of aldermen now-a-days turning priests—throwing off the ermined robe and gold chain to assume the gown and cassock, and turning to long fasts after feeding on turtle. Just fancy any of our late mayors entering on priest's orders : I have a whole roll of them now in my mind's eye, though I do not think I could pick out one that would suit the ministry, unless indeed it were a certain active and energetic friend of mine, to whose multitudinous merits and qualifications it would be hazardous to ascribe a limit. The college, as the form and situation of the ground still plainly indicate, had strong walls (some portions of which are, I think, still traceable on the side of the river Trym,) with turrets on each corner, and one between, and a tower on the south, with battlements. These fortifications were always favourite promenades with the holy fathers ; and I have sometimes thought with myself whether Cannyngs, as he walked in cope and cassock, as he doubtless did, many a summer's evening along those battlements, and heard the distant swell of his own St. Mary's bells, ever wished to be back again in the old burgh, in the "peopled city's busy hum," and to taste capon and calipash once more. To be sure, if the couplet speaks truth, there is

" No lord or knight of the shire
Lives half so well as a holy friar ;"

but there is no authority in poetry or prose, that I am aware of, that has yet been audacious enough to assert that father or friar could ever equal, in opportunities of eating, a Mayor of Bristol ; though to give the clergy their due, there have been some very eminent professors of the art gastronomic amongst them : two or three abbés, of whose sermons we never heard, having

handed down works on cookery to posterity. Nor has the Anglican church been altogether without its "ornaments" in this particular. I happened some time ago to be with a friend in Wiltshire, who was a churchwarden, and with whom I went to a visitation dinner at —r; I sat near a well-conditioned divine, who no sooner found out I was from Bristol than he earnestly enquired "whether we got much turtle there now." I said I believed we had; though I only spoke from public report. "Ah, Sir," said he, "it will never again be what it was in Burnham's time; Burnham, Sir, was great for balls; he made them as firm as flint, and yet as light as a feather." Every body who has ever eaten turtle knows what the little savoury bread balls are, and all who know what balls are, know who Burnham was. I was a little amused with the grateful zest with which my rev. neighbour cherished the memory of a former master of the Montague. But a still more curious incident was in store for me: not far off was a haunch of mutton: my neighbour was helped with a fine longitudinal cut; he looked for a moment admiringly on his plate, and as he emptied a spoonful of salt on the side, his face was complacency itself. He looked, however, for something; he glanced up the table and down; he called the waiter and whispered something; the waiter went away, but did not return. We were mid-way up the table, and after a pause my neighbour rose, and directing himself to the Bishop of Salisbury, who presided, said, in a tone at once emphatic and aggrieved, "My Lord!" Sarum lifted his calm eye towards my neighbour. "My Lord, *they have forgotten the sweet sauce!*" Sarum has no turn for jokes; yet there was a quiet comical condolence in his voice as he said—"Indeed, Doctor!" Now, this may appear a trifling thing to make an episcopal appeal about; but when one considers what a serious improvement the supplementary sweet sauce is to a haunch of Southdown, and how easily obtained it is, one can hardly blame even a divine for deploring its absence. If they

went so far as to provide the mutton for "episcopal stomachs," as Mr. Turner elegantly designates them, I see no reason why *alter deficit*. Had William Cannyngs filled the place of Sarum, he would understand my friend's feelings: a past mayor would not have been insensible to the importance of sweet sauce.—When Sydney Smith first got the prebendal stall in our Cathedral, he was lodging in College-green, and as his fame as a convivialist was not then as noised and known abroad as subsequently, he was *allowed* to dine at home more frequently than one would suppose; and his dinner was always a beef-steak, and that beef-steak he always bought himself. I was then, as I am now, my own purveyor, and there were few days when he was in residence that I did not meet him at Burge's, in Denmark-street (his favourite butcher and mine), overseeing and selecting his own cut. After Sydney had described a circle with his finger round a certain pin-bone, and emphatically told the man of fat to "cut there, and cut boldly," as the Roman augur said, Burge turned to me and asked, "and where will you be helped, Sir?" "I'll follow suit," said I, "the cut next to Mr. Smith's; I can't go wrong with such a precedent." The Canon's droll eye twinkled, his large, pouting, and somewhat luxurious lip moved with that comic twitch which spoke the man, as he said, "You're a wise man, Sir; this is one of the cases where you can't err if you follow the church, and you'll find your obedience rewarded with a good beef-steak."

That Cannyngs was not unmindful of the old city whose curule chair he had filled five times, we know from the fact of his having given the Mayor of Bristol power to appoint an old man, and the Mayoress the nomination of an old woman, to the alms-house which he built in Westbury.

The wall and towers to which I alluded as encircling the college of Westbury, were standing up to the time of Charles the First; but they were razed by Prince Rupert during the brief period he had possession of the

city, that they might not be made a nest for the republican hornets. This precaution, however, did not, I think, prevent his "saturnine saintship," Oliver Cromwell, subsequently turning the church into a barrack for a troop of horse. The sacrilegious round-heads, however, behaved themselves pretty well from all I can see; at least they left us in tolerable integrity a beautiful church—a church capable of being made still more beautiful. It preserves most of its collegiate character: it has side aisles divided by two rows of lofty and commanding arches, from the centre or main one, which is lit by clerestory windows.

It has a very handsome, and, if I recollect rightly, apical chancel, with a good painted east window: there is also a lesser chancel at the south side which may be, like many others of the same kind, private property: there is to this, as well as to the main chancel, an ascent of two or three steps, which if opened to view, and the pews differently arranged, would impart a fine and imposing effect to the east end of the building. On the exterior, the tower, which is elaborate, south porch, and other parts, "deserve," as the guide-books say, "notice, and will repay a careful examination." In the chancel, beneath an altar-tomb, repose the right rev. remains of Dr. John Carpenter, Bishop of Worcester about the middle of the fifteenth century, and who was so fond of the pleasant air of Westbury while living, that when dead he made them a present of his bones. In so old a church I wonder there are not more monuments, and I'm not aware that Oliver Cromwell took any of them away to make milestones of them. As a boy, however, I recollect being often attracted from my devotions by one in the north aisle, which particularly interested me: it is a painted stone recumbent military figure, I think of Sir Somebody Hill. He has a sword by his side, and looks as questionably on the congregation as if they were intruding: but the curious circumstance is that he has a moveable iron skull cap, which he wears in all fashions,

puts on or leaves off, according to the taste and humour I suppose of the clerk and sexton : some days he has it firmly fastened, with a warlike determination, on the centre of his head ; another time it is perched jauntily on the side ; now it is pulled sullenly over his brows ; again it rakishly overshadows his left eye and a section of his nose, as if the valiant statue had strayed from its canopied recess during the night, and getting drunk in one of the dozen beer-houses which beautify the village, returning, was surprised at cock crow in a very incompetent state. The churchyard, however, which has a pleasant picturesque situation, is not quite so barren of " memorial, monument and tomb." Who does not recollect the tomb close by the public path, " To the memory of Richard Ruddie, who was coachman to Sir Robert Cann, Bart., and was robbed and murdered by Bennet and Payne, 27th October, 1743." As a boy, when I used to walk to Westbury with my father, this to me was a source of awe and dread ; and I used to pass shrinkingly by the tomb of the murdered man, for the village gossips had invested both it and the whole story with innumerable associations, all frightful to the fancy. Bennet and Payne, or one of them, was hung in chains near the Down for this act, and swung creakingly over many a passenger's head as he hurried with frightened steps across the turf on the long winter's night. There was a story that they not only murdered and robbed, but eat the bodies of those they killed : however, the baronet's coachman seems to have been made of " sterner stuff " than their ordinary victims, for he was fortunate enough to obtain Christian burial in a state of corporal integrity ; and the parish authorities, when the church lately underwent repairs, seem to have selected this of all others as an object of " repaint " and restoration. In the north-east corner I read the following appeal to the passer-by :—

" This child was drowned that lieth here ;
 Reader ! stay ! and drop a tear,
 Not for the child, but for its mother,
 Because as how she's got no other ;"

or something to this effect. "I had no "tears to shed," as Mark Anthony said, so I passed on with a dry eye.

A good many attend the church, but it is not a good congregation. I mean the congregation, independently of the neighbouring respectable families who must come to church, does not comprise many of the humble and poor parishioners: where they go I cannot say, but, on making some inquiries as to the religious statistics of the parish, I received the following curious and incongruous catalogue:—"We have a Baptist chapel, a Methodist chapel, a Popish chapel, half-a-dozen private ranting-rooms, and about twelve beershops!" But whether the poor go to the dissenting chapels, the ranting-rooms, or the beershops, this I know, they don't seem to go to church. Is there no reason for it? Is there no want of attention or care any where? The vicar, or incumbent, or perpetual curate, or whatever other description my friend, the Rev. R. Carrow, rejoice in, preaches there once a month, and then does or says nothing to make people uncomfortable; and the curate, being also the chaplain to the Infirmary, has little leisure left for parochial visiting, so that the poor are very probably left in a very independent state to themselves and the beershops. This is a pity; the parish is of great extent, and should have the undivided use of the curate at least, who should make it a point once in the week to "darken the door" of every poor parishioner. Mr. Mais has, I think, £20 a-year as chaplain of the Infirmary, I would, therefore, suggest to my friend, Mr. Carrow, to add this sum on to the present stipend, so as to confine the services of Mr. M. altogether to Westbury, and, in consideration of this, we shall willingly dispense with his monthly sermon. The curate is an excellent and pious man, but he is not an animated preacher; he means well, and there is a strain of devotional sincerity about his sermons, but he never could hold my attention (I am ashamed to say) for many minutes together. Many years ago, I was a regular attendant at the Cathedral, and I recollect one

day sitting next to my old friend Dean Beake, when a rather "slow" man (I forget who now) was preaching. When he had plodded away to about the middle of his discourse, my Very Rev. neighbour nudged me with his elbow: I turned my ear towards him: "Do you know what I am thinking of?" said the Dean. "I don't know, Sir," I replied. "I'm thinking," said the Dean, who was a great calculator, "how many bricks it would take to stop up that window." It is something the same with me, I'm ever disposed to wander when I'm at Westbury, and am too often, I am ashamed to confess it, mentally engaged in cutting down the pews. There is a want of life about the congregation, too, and I think if my estimable friend, the curate, would only try to put some spirit into them, the effort would have a similar and salutary effect on himself at the same time.

St. George's, Somerset : or Easton- in-Gordano.

To the steam-boat passenger coming up the river, Pill (or Crockerne Pull), with its sickly yellow hovels and beershops rising out of and surrounded by slime and mud, and its groups of tarry sailors and tattered women leaning over dirty half-doors and crumbling walls, is unpicturesque and unpleasant enough; but until you traverse its narrow broken streets, which, but for courtesy, might better be called kennels, and see the traces, not so much of poverty as of filth, vice, and intemperance which abound, you have no idea of the commonwealth of dirt and degradation which a community of sailors can raise around them. Quin, the player, when indignant with the people of Bristol, once said, that when the swine possessed with devils ran down the steep into the sea, they never stopped until they landed at Pill; and, considering the favourite element of these four-footed animals, I can hardly conceive anything more suitable to their tastes, so far as mud and mire go. Pope, in his imitation of Spenser, gives a far-better portrait of such a place in verse than I can in prose :—

“ And narrow passes there, with houses low,
Where ever anon the stream is eyed,
And many a boat, soft sliding to and fro;
Where oft are heard the notes of infant woe—
The short thick sob, loud scream, and shriller squall.

And on the broken pavement, here and there,
Doth many a stinking sprat and herring lie.
A brandy and tobacco-shop is near,
And hens and dogs and hogs are feeding by;
And here a sailor's jacket hangs to dry.
At every door are sun-burnt matrons seen,
Mending old nets to catch the scaly fry,
Now singing shrill.”

Even John Bunyan, accustomed as he has been for the most part to carry his rider through wholesome hamlets and pleasant villages, seemed not a little surprised on finding himself up to his fetlocks in a sort of amphibious mixture, which partook in equal parts of land soil and marine mud ; and, as he glanced round on the crowded hovels, which strove to look gay, but smiled ghastly in yellow ochre, he seemed to think—" Well, I have been in a great many places, but this is something new—decidedly new to me."

I passed through Pill without attracting the attention of more than a few diminutive infants, who made an abortive attempt to pelt me with potato-skins ; and reached the hamlet of St. George's, more directed by my own instinct than anything else. I put up at the post-office—the post-office and the hostelry being one. The stableman had his hands in his pockets, and looked as if he expected me. I inquired the hour at which they went into church ; and he said he thought it was half-past ten—he believed it was half-past ten—indeed he was almost sure it was half-past ten.

" My good friend, you don't seem to speak from very great practical acquaintance with the fact," said I, " judging from the diffidence with which you pronounce on the time. I can hardly conceive that you sing in the church choir."

His reply was—" How could he go to church, when gentlemen came with their horses ?—there must be somebody to attend to them."

" Thank you, that's quite enough," I replied, and I felt a twinge at the moment ; but whether it proceeded from conscience or the rheumatism, I did not stop to investigate.

" The nearest way to the church, my good friend ?" said I.

" Over the stile at the corner, and across the field, sir."

Parson Mirehouse, could you not contrive to get the stones in the walk that leads to the south entrance broken a little smaller ? in its present state, to one with

tender toes a short pilgrimage to Compostella with peas in his shoes is not a much greater penance. Like myself, I found all that went before me (I could see it from the fresh foot marks), were obliged to walk on the wet grass. I met a gentleman in a dark grey wrapper in the churchyard, who inquired if I could let him have a seat. "With pleasure, sir," I said, leading the way, as if I were the lay impropiator himself. I looked around, and, close by the pulpit, I saw an immense seat, which at first I took to be the churching pew, but eventually it turned out to be the freehold attached to the manor-house; the manor-house being void so was the pew, and to this I led my friend in the dark wrapper.

On the tenor-bell in the tower is the poesy—

"Come when I call,
To serve God all;"

I am sorry, however, from the appearance of the church—the emptiness of the seats, both free and appropriated—to say that the musical invitation of the tenor seems to meet with sorry compliance from the surrounding neighbourhood—the said bell and its five companions sounding their pressing and pious call each Sunday morning in unwilling ears. In the great gallery at the east end there were one bassoon player and four singers, and none else; free seats for nearly four hundred in the nave were occupied by some half-dozen adults and a handful of children; and even the pews boasted but a poor sprinkling.

How is this? Easton-in-Gordano is a large place, and ought to furnish at least one church: Pill alone might supply a congregation. I know there is nothing, humanly speaking, inviting to a clergyman in such a place as Pill, with its rough inhabitants and uncleanly community; but these disadvantages must not, and I am happy to say seldom do, stop or deter a clergyman from his duty. Indeed, I think one of the most pleasing and Christian features in the character of the clergy of the Anglican Church, is the equanimity with which they adapt and apply themselves to their situations in this

respect, however trying and uncomfortable they may be. It has often surprised me with what ease and facility—with what affectionate humility and absence of all that strained condescension which too often belongs to the laity in a similar station—the clergy of the Church of England seem with their very first charge to fit into, and make themselves at home in walks of life with which, until their ministry, they had been wholly unacquainted: taken for the most part from the higher ranks of life, educated in and amongst that class, and moving for years in the scholastic and aristocratic atmosphere of the Universities, they are no sooner ordained to some poor and populous cure, than they seem endowed with a sudden and almost instinctive capacity for their new position—become quickly acquainted with the habits and natures of a description of people before unknown to them, and the refinement of the gentleman, instead of being effaced by, softens down into sweetest harmony with the humility of the Christian. This, to my mind, is the very perfection of the Anglican established priesthood. They centre in themselves as it were all classes—they are equal to all and inferior to none: the curate enters the lordly mansion, and as a scholar and a gentleman is not beneath its noble owner; he next visits the cot of the meanest herd, and is his affectionate monitor, his instructor, his friend. The servant of the church, he stands erect in the calm confidence of his high commission amongst the highest and before the haughtiest influences—the servant of the church, he also sinks his own individual standing in doing its service with lowly submission amongst the lowliest.

This is one of the reasons may the Anglican Church may be called the Church of the Poor Man, and we may depend upon it, it is amongst the main causes from which its pastoral influence is derived. The poor are quick enough to perceive and appreciate native refinement, which even in *their* eyes adds a charm to religion; and admonition comes recommended to them with

greater force if they defer to the man while they listen to the teacher. I have no intention to wound or disparage the ministers of other denominations, but they have not these advantages: nearly always of the humblest rank, and seldom educated beyond that rank, they cannot rise to those above them, and with their equals they can hardly have that influence which station added to a blameless life and a Christian character, so legitimately confers.

I have heard persons say of such places as Pill, "We don't cut blocks with razors: the way to manage such rough materials is with rough materials like themselves, who will go amongst them and talk to them in strong language, such as they understand." But I don't admit either the truth or reasonableness of such observations. I am no believer in even the efficacy of your rough work, and rough workers: give me a clergyman who will go amongst them, and quietly, and equably, and mildly, and with amenity, labour—labour with patience and humility in his calling, and let him be as gentlemanly as you please, depend upon it in the long run he will do more even amongst the rudest materials, in effecting a salutary change, than your roughest enthusiast, your "tomahawk and scalping knife preachers," as some one styled them: there may not be those sudden perturbations—those paroxysms which almost invariably have their relapses: but there will be a steady progress, an almost insensible but still continual gaining on the mind and manners—a gradual reclaiming of the heart and habits, which is the solid, the salutary, and lasting reformation. Rowland Hill, it is true, is said to have done wonders amongst the "Wapping sinners," as he styled them in one of his serio-comic discourses, but his exertions at the time only stood out in such prominent relief because others did nothing, and not because his spiritual buffooneries were preferable to the serious proprieties of pastoral instruction.

Sailors are said to be either great reprobates or great

fanatics: this may be because they are wholly neglected or left to erratic enthusiasts. For my part, I see no reason why sailors should be less susceptible to the good felt by, or the teachings found to influence, other men. Their calling is one of peril—in the midst of life they may be truly said to be in death—their home is on the most majestic element: they are surrounded with sublimity, and who ought to be more alive to the power, and glory, and mercy of God than “they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep: for he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof; they mount up to heaven and, go down again to the depths?” It is Young, I believe, who says, “an undevout astronomer is mad;” but, for my part, I cannot conceive how a seafaring man, who does not feel some religion, can with more truth be said to be in his senses. It may seem not quite so unnatural for us landmen, enveloped in mists that our own little passions have raised around us, busied with many things, and hardly raising our eyes above the level of ourselves and our daily occupations, to claim some excuse for not seeing the wonders of creation that spread themselves around and above us: but there is nothing, so far as human ken can go, to hide the grandeur and expanse of God’s works—this “universal frame”—from those that “do business in the great waters;” and I am convinced, if the poor Pill pilot would go and hear one of the Rev. Mr. Mirehouse’s many good sermons, or, in case of his not going, or “not being able to go,” as the phrase is, if Mr. Mirehouse would be content to forego the comforts of his carpetted drawing-room on certain mornings or evenings of the week, and go down and teach him in his hamlet “by the Avon’s ooze,” such teachings, I’ll be bound, would not be thrown away. The poor pilot or fisherman, when out in his skiff or yawl at night in the Bristol Channel, with the stars shining above him,

and no noise but the rush of the waters as they surge by him, and break against the bows and sides of his boat, would be sure to think what he had heard, over again in that sublime solitude, while looking out for some foreign vessel or watching his nets. He could not help it: the words he heard would be sure to occur to him in the solemn silence of the night, and steal insensibly to his recollection. In the peopled steam-boat you cannot feel as that man in his lonely skiff would feel: it is to him alone in that situation I should say it is given to apprehend, if any one fully can, the fearful grandeur of the passage, "And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters!"

I would not seem invidious in urging this view of the case on the Vicar of St. George's; nor would I be supposed to imply that he neglects Pill. All I know for a certainty is, that he ought not. For a man who wishes to do his duty, and is not afraid of difficulties, there is a fine field in such a place. Mr. Mirehouse, in the admirable sermon which I heard him preach on Sunday adverted with a great deal of truth and striking force, and with a practical observation which went home to every man's experience, to the embarrassing difficulty in which a clergyman is often placed in his visits by the side of the dying bed—He meets, for instance, with great religious ignorance in one whose only chance of recovery is perhaps from mental and bodily repose; and yet, if from that deep ignorance you would arouse him, you must shake his soul with a true sense of its awful situation. Other circumstances there are equally perplexing and trying to the clergyman in this perhaps the most solemn of his duties: there were, however, on the other hand, many things to counterbalance them for good, and amongst the rest he alluded to the opportunity the hour of trial afforded the clergyman of speaking with effect to those families in affliction, by whom his words were lightly regarded in seasons of prosperous levity. In a seafaring community, like Pill, where casualties must frequently

occur, frequent opportunities of this kind must also occur. The scene in the fisherman's cottage at Mussel Crag, in the *Antiquary*, occurs with all its touching force to our recollection. Every fishing and pilot hamlet must have its sorrowing Mucklebackits and its "poor Steenie" at some season or another, when the judicious clergyman may take more advantage of the occasion than the well-meaning Blattergowl had the discretion to do.

I wish, indeed, that the Vicar of Easton in Gordano could or would turn the population of Pill to a little more account, or that at least some could be found to fill the church that takes its name after the martyred and martial Saint of Capadocia. It is melancholy to read in large letters on the front of the gallery, that about twelve or fifteen years ago, and during the churchwardenship of two persons, names now forgotten by me, and the Rev. Henry Mirehouse being vicar, the church was enlarged, and free seats for 480 persons added; and then to look at those seats, and see that some dozen people, exclusive of the school boys, have availed themselves of the privilege.

If I were a clergyman I could not bear to look at the gaunt backs of empty forms Sunday after Sunday from the pulpit. I'd go out into the highways, and almost force people to come in. Mr. Mirehouse is a Magistrate, and exercises——, but stay! may not this magistracy have something to do with these empty forms? I may be called an officious old fellow for interfering with what some may say does not concern me; but as a general principle, as the phrase is, I am averse to having the magisterial and clerical character combined. It may be a weakness of mine, but such is the case. The affectionate confidence with which a flock should approach the parson is, I am of opinion, counteracted and deterred by the fear, or at least awe, with which they regard him as a Justice. There is every thing that is amiable, merciful, and paternal in the ideal of a country clergyman: he is the father of

the parish, and there should be nothing to deter his people from seeking his advice and counsel both in sin and sorrow : whether the terror with which in their weak minds they invest the Justice, "clad in the panoply of legal power," presiding on a high bench, and punishing with earthly penalties his own parishioners, is compatible with this affectionate confidence and respectful familiarity, is a question for others : I don't think it is—I don't like the "composite order" in this respect—I don't like to see the "statutes at large" side by side with the old divines in a clergyman's library. In fact, I don't think a man can serve the Church and the Lord Chancellor, without letting what he owes to one clash with what he ought to be in the other. I know it is a sacrifice which many men do not like—this abandonment of power and authority ; but if I were the Vicar of Easton in Gordano, I'd throw up my commission, and see if those four hundred and eighty free sittings did not fill a little better. This and more frequent visits to the pilots and fishermen of Pill might have the desired effect.

There was once a chapelry at Pill, and the site is still indicated by the name ; and there ought to be one there at this moment. Why, indeed, in these enterprising days of church-building, when some people are almost going out of their way for localities in which to plant churches, it is still without one, I can't conceive. If there were any there but a poor community of pilots you'd have two proprietary chapels in the place, and two popular preachers long ago. At present it is left to some erratic dissenter, and an occasional visit from the "Eirene;" to the latter, however, I am sorry to hear, there is likely to be some interruption, and for a considerable time, as misunderstandings have for the present transformed the little "ship of peace" into a "man of war." I don't pretend to decide on the cause of difference ; my friend the Editor has kindly lent me a little pamphlet, put forth by, and printed for, the Rev. Doctor Ashley, and from a cursory perusal of this, the

points of disagreement or discontent on his part seem to be threefold: First, he complains of being charged by one of the Society of Merchant Venturers with "*driving about with dogs after his carriage*;" and being required by the committee to answer that objection, the simple facts of the case turn out to be, according to the Dr., "*a dog six inches high—two ponies little more than thirty-six inches high.*" The Dr. is precise; and while he was so minutely descriptive, he ought to have stated the breed of his canine follower; for a Newfoundland with a marine chaplain would not be out of place, though a bull-dog might. But the truth is, I am not casuist enough to see the difference in point of religion and propriety between ponies and coach-horses; for I see no irreligion or impropriety in either, if a man can afford them, though the Dr. in apology seems to think it necessary to add, "the offence" was committed twelve years ago. His second cause of complaint is, not having had his draught for some rope ends and mops duly honoured, and being sent to sea in a stormy season without his "foul weather jib." The third is comprised in some misunderstanding with an anonymous writer, about the morals of the islanders of Caldy, whom the Doctor did not invest with all the cardinal virtues. As I said before, *non nobis tantas componere lites*—"who can decide when *Doctors* disagree;" but I regret the difference, for it was a very interesting and picturesque, and at the same time a very practical mission. I have often passed the little ship as it has been beating up the Channel, tossing the tide aside with its bows, and fluttering its flag of peace lightly in the sea-breeze; and have always thought that the project sprung from a happy and a Christian thought. Around the tiny vessel were freighted merchantmen and laden barks, and you could read "gain" and "the world" upon every hull; this trim-built little craft, however, was alone on the "peopled waters," the messenger of peace, the monument of disinterestedness; and as the sea-gulls

whirled in irregular circles round, now poisoning themselves about its rustling pennant, now dipping their white wings in the surface of the waters, I thought that the albatross, "the bird of peace and good omen," ought alone to haunt and hover above such a craft.

One thing I know, I certainly did think that little ship at least would never be boarded by a spirit of dissension, which however, from this would seem to find its way any where and every where. I have seen the Doctor on deck, sweeping the "dotted waters" with his telescope, but I suppose he never saw contention in the horizon, or he would have got out his "foul weather jib" and guarded against it. I was glad when I heard the Doctor was appointed to the vessel, because I believed him fit for it: he liked the life of a sailor, and duty and inclination went hand in hand: it was a pleasant occupation—he had at once a chaplaincy and a yacht, and an agreeable variety and change of scene—now lying in Penarth roads, now touching at watering places. And besides, when he was at sea you knew he could not be on land, and to me who have had my dinner spoiled some dozen times by casually falling in for his hour and a half of eloquence at some of the Bristol churches, this was no very subordinate consideration. If the Doctor retires, I know only one man capable of succeeding him, and that is my friend the Rev. Horatio Montague, who is, I think, an old seafarer, and might be at once clergyman and commander, without danger from weather jibs or dog fancies.

But to return to land: I can't congratulate the Vicar of St. George's on his architectural taste, for it is since his incumbency that the old church has been pulled down. I recollect the old church very well; and for the same money expended on the new it might have been enlarged or repaired, in which case we should not have a fine old Gothic tower with a half school-room, half conventicle, built on to the east end of it, as at present, but a parish church. The existing edifice is a cold, staring, comfortless, bare, barn-like building, with

a few old, barbarous monuments, repainted and reset in its modern walls ; amongst the latter are a series to the multitudinous family of the Morgans : over the manor pew is a remarkably odd one, to "the charitable and virtuous Mrs. Mary Morgan," who died at 54, and made such good use of her time as to have three husbands during that period : the virtuous Mrs. Mary's first husband was "the hon. Band of gentlemen pensioners"—I beg pardon, *one* of the hon. band of gentlemen pensioners, the second a Lewis, and the third a Morgan. Mrs. Mary, the virtuous, was no monogamist ; beneath are three red-headed cherubs, looking as lively and life-like as rose pink and Prussian blue can make them : I hope they are not meant to be at all allegorical of her three spouses, for they are the very acme of preternatural ugliness. In the chancel, which is a poor thing, there is a cumbrous half-length figure, in canonicals, of Roger Soudon, vicar of that parish a century and a half ago : Roger evidently had ambition, but his executors had no taste. The entrance to the gallery and tower, which is through the church, is quite exposed : indeed nothing could be in worse judgment than the whole edifice. Whoever the Vandal architect was that knocked down the old church, I might have forgiven him if he had not built the new one.

The Vicar is an admirable reader, impressive without ostentation, and when I heard his sermon I wondered there were so many empty seats ; his manner is solemn and earnest, without severity, and he talks home with the directness not merely of earnest admonition, but strong common sense, to the reason, business, and hearts of his hearers. I should like to try the effects of such a sermon from a man who had not a suffix in the shape of a J.P. to his name.

I think the singing would be very fairly done, and the congregation would join, if the old fellow with the bassoon in the gallery would allow them ; the instrument emits supernatural growls, which have quite a frightful effect on one's ears. If I were the Vicar, I'd sell the

"horse's leg," as the country people call it, and buy new drapery for the pulpit with the proceeds.

In the Church of St. George's, or rather the church that preceded the present one, preached the pious and learned George Bull, in the latter part of the 17th century Vicar of this parish, and afterwards Bishop of St. David's, who stands amongst the first divines of the Church of England, who not only by their "doctrine and lives" "adorned the Gospel of God their Saviour," at a trying season, but defended it by their powerful writings against pertinacious and bold schismatics. The account of his residence in this very parish, as given (I think) in Nelson's Life of him, published in 1713, furnishes an admirable example of the life of a country parish priest. We are told that St. George's, at the time of his incumbency, swarmed with schismatics, and that he was eminently successful in convincing some and silencing others. Coleridge calls him and Waterland, "the Classical Writers on the Trinity."* The pulpit in which Bull preached is, I suppose, gone or sawed up: had it remained, it would have been a hallowed memorial; as it is, we are now left to the imagination; and we may fancy if we will this able and excellent man walking from his vicarage to the church, and delivering Sunday after Sunday to a rural congregation, doctrines and discourses destined to live as long as truth and the English language endure.

* Mr. Coleridge's admiration of Bull and Waterland as high theologians was very great. Bull he used to read in the Latin *Defensio Fidei Nicænæ*, using the Jesuit Zola's edition of 1784, which, I think, he bought at Rome. He told me once, that when he was reading a Protestant English Bishop's work on the Trinity, in a copy edited by an Italian Jesuit in Italy, he felt proud of the Church of England, and in good humour with the Church of Rome.—*Editor's Note in Table Talk.*

Slymbridge, Gloucestershire.

It was not my original intention to have travelled so far from home, but being on a visit with an old friend in the neighbourhood, I thought I would walk across and see the old and, as I had heard, beautiful Church of Slymbridge.

While on my road I heard the cry of hounds, and very soon in front of me passed a hare, and about four couple of awkward young dogs. It surely cannot be my lord, thought I, who has chosen the Sabbath for a hare-hunt: nor indeed was it; the dogs were hunting on their own account, and for their own amusement, as I subsequently learned. They were not interns of his lordship's kennel, but young dogs "out at nurse," as I think the term is, his lordship compelling every renter of £50 to keep one of those awkward overgrown puppies for the space of a year, until they are qualified for the pack; thus there are few of the tenants, who might not claim the honor of being fosterfather to a foxhound. These creatures have the most extraordinary habits: though scattered amongst the farm-houses through the country, they will to the number of six, eight, or ten, meet as it were by concert at some central spot, and, as I said before, commence hunting on their own account, killing hares for themselves, the biggest bully always having the best bit: with the shades of evening they "homeward plod their weary way," "leaving the world to darkness and" the hares,

not, however, it is thought by the naturalists round about, without a perfect intelligence to meet again in the morning, when, having had their breakfast (and each is said to eat as much as a pig), these loose-living creatures go out according to appointment for another day's dissipation.

It was with no slight relief of mind I saw his lordship was not answerable for this Sunday's sport, and I should have felt comfortable under the conviction that he was saying his prayers in the great pew amidst the ashes of his ancestors, if it were not my misfortune to pass the pool of Slynbridge, when I witnessed that, which had I expected it, I should have gone round sooner than have seen. What think you of one of

"The Peers of England's realm,
High Lords of State,"

engaged on a Sabbath day in duck hunting on his own estates, and amongst his own tenants. My lord! my lord! are there not six days when you might decoy ducks to your heart's content, and not set such a pattern to those who look up to you as their exemplar as well as their protector? If you choose to run the risk of the spiritual responsibility of such an act yourself, it is your own business, and if done out of the public sight, I should have nothing to say to it or you. But there are some deeds the mischief of which are not confined to the doer; and what, think you, are likely to be the moral obligations and Sabbath impressions of your tenantry when they see one powerful by possessions, ennobled by birth, inheriting the accumulated honors of a lofty and long line of ancestors, offending in this open manner, not merely against the solemn code of the decalogue, but the received impressions of society?—should we be surprised if they too deserted their parish church, and turned Sabbath duck-hunters, when

"The noblest of the land leads them on?"

Mind, my lord, I ask for no proof of active religion from you; I do not say you ought to go to church

twice on a Sunday, and ring the Castle bell before retiring to rest on the Sabbath night, and call the servants into the baronial hall, and take down the iron clasped family Bible (for Berkeley Castle, after all men say, is not, I am sure, without such an heir-loom, though thrust away somewhere amongst old helmets and hauberks) and have your chaplain read prayers for them there—though such things have been ere now, and that amidst ancestral halls and towers as time-honoured as your own. But there are certain outward observances of order which belong to the list of “duties,” which society expects from property in return for the rights it possesses; and one is, a decent example from the great to those dependant upon them. My lord, you have been, as the Irish demagogue says, “one of the best abused men” in England; and I have no wish to add anything to the amount of invective already launched against you. I speak more in sorrow than in anger when I say, I believe you capable of better things did you not strive against them; and if your haughty spirit would but bow to it, I am convinced that before your hairs, now grey, become thinner, you might do much to leave a truly noble name behind you. All your affected indifference cannot conceal your high mental faculties either from yourself or the world; and I believe no man with your intelligence can be ignorant of the duties he owes to society, to say nothing of heaven: and Sabbath duck-hunting in open day, you know just as well as I do, is not an example which a nobleman ought to set his simple tenantry. Not all the excitement of physical enjoyment can keep conscience always at bay; and when the chase is over, and the gloom of evening is gathering around the grey towers of the castle and the ancestral oaks in the park, I think “whispered thoughts” must sometimes creep out from the old banners and armour around the hall, to say—

“The pride of heraldry, the pomp of power,

Await alike the inevitable hour.”

Q

and that large capacities and wide possessions were not given us to be employed, as if by the brute that perisheth. I am no more a lover of cant than your lordship is said to be, and I know that courtly manners and the bland exterior often smooth over a hollow heart and heartless life, in a sycophantic world's esteem: yet whatever foulness and rottenness there may be within, the whitening of the sepulchre, though it will not deceive the eye that sees through all, is at least an act of deference to the received usages and outward proprieties of society: and there is a description of merit which belongs to polished hypocrisy, you may depend upon it, however in the indignant misanthropy of your nature you may despise it. Sydney Smith told the Pennsylvanians "men did not live for gin-sling and sherry-cobbler alone;" to take a liberty with the phrase, it is not for duck-hunting or fox-hunting (however unobjectionable both may be during six days of the week) that a noble of the land alone ought to live; the patriarchial position of a powerful landlord imposes other duties upon him, for which he will be held accountable if not in this world, at least in that upon which he will enter, when

"Having drunk and dined * * *
The family vault receives another lord."

The tall and exquisitely symmetrical spire of Slymbridge, cutting the sky, and "like silent finger" pointing to Heaven, is a beautiful object to the eye. It is one of those sights that, when seen for the first time and from a distance, towering above the old yew trees which vainly attempt to reach it, elicit the lines—

"These wonders of his grace,
How beautiful they stand!
The honors of our native place—
The bulwarks of our land."

There were some peasants standing by the south porch. I asked who the parson was. They said a Mr. Goldspur or Goldsburgh, I think: but that he had another living (oh! these "other livings!") in Somersetshire,

where he resided : there were, however, two curates, which they seemed to think a very good substitute for one rector. "And here they be," exclaimed my informant, pointing towards a square house adjoining the churchyard, and very like a tea-cannister, though it turned out to be the parsonage, and from which two clergymen were approaching in their gowns and bands. The loiterers bowed to them as they came up, and I, lifting my hat, made a low obeisance, as I always do to those wearing the livery of the church. As soon as the clergy entered, I led the way for the churchyard loungers, and found myself in one of the finest country churches I have been in for some time. I took up my place in one of the stalls of the chancel, where there were some other persons sitting, and from which I had an opportunity of seeing a very primitive congregation and not a very large one. Both curates occupied the reading-desk, dividing the duty, and in the service there was the utmost solemnity and simplicity combined. The singing, however, consisted of a solo from the clerk, to which the congregation listened with breathless attention. I tried to join him, but being at such a distance our voices did not blend, and I gave it up ; and indeed he did not seem to want any assistance, for he warbled away as happy and independent as a bird. I afterwards learned from two interesting little girls, daughters of the village tailor, who sat near me, that a violoncello was in contemplation ; and I think there was something said about a flute, but on this point I am not quite clear. The elder of the curates, also a Minor Canon of Bristol (the Rev. E. Carter my little neighbours told me his name was), preached, and pleased me so much that I mentally vowed he should have the next living of which I became patron. There was *matter* in the sermon made plain to the homely comprehensions around him, such as they might carry with them to their hearths, and recollect over again as they sat round their wood fires in their cottages. The building bore internal and external signs of extensive

restorations and repairs, not quite completed: there was a lofty, commanding, cathedral effect about the pile; and when service was over, I could not help loitering behind the congregation to look around me.

While doing so the elder curate came out of the vestry, and kindly offered to show me the church. I willingly availed myself of his courtesy; and found him better informed in ecclesiastical architecture than any amateur I think I had ever before met with. The restorations were made mainly under his superintendence, and he had with his own hands, worked often till one o'clock at night in that silent and solitary old church, without seeing the ghost of even a bygone Berkeley, cleaning and bringing out the delicate foliage of the capitals of the columns which supported the two rows of arches dividing the north and south aisles from the centre. New clerestory windows of a beautiful design had been inserted, and a new pierced parapet carried round the church. The edifice is, I believe, about the time of Edward the Second: the chancel, which is the oldest portion, being the decorated, and the other parts principally of the perpendicular order.

Some old fresco paintings had been discovered, and I could trace portions of one over the chancel arch. The rector had given nearly £1000 towards the restorations.

There was no nonsense that I could see—no Camdenian extravagance to frighten nervous people. I confess I have no sympathy for those outre gentlemen, who are for introducing into our churches anything for which our church services have no use, or our ritual does not recognise, merely because they were there in Catholic times, for I do not see why they should be such admirers of "the old faith" in little things, and not in great; or why they should insist on crosses and candlesticks, and keep their wives.

My reverend friend invited me to the parsonage to lunch after I had seen the church; and merely to see if curates were conscious of cold roast beef, I consented.

though my country friend's beans and bacon were almost due.

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of a very handsome worked cushion of Berlin wool embossed work, with four tassels. I am thus particular that the fair donor (who will accept my thanks) may be able to recognize her present in print. The popular curates had better not be jealous of me, though I confess they have some cause; for though a rheumatic old man in a sober brown coat is not as picturesque an object as a young parson with a perfect white tie, a comely face, hair indisputably divided in front, and a sublime determination to be roasted alive rather than preach in a surplice, still I may become the fashion, and, from slippers and cushions, people take to overpowering me with silver coffee-pots. I don't throw out this as a hint—I only glance at it as a mere possibility.

The Editor was requested to return the napkins in which this present was wrapped up: I hope the owner has received them.

Chew Stoke.

A DISAPPOINTMENT.

I had gathered from my respected and respectable friend, Mistress Jenny K ———, that Morning Service commenced at Compton Martin at eleven o'clock, so I started fully resolved to say my prayers on Sunday, February the 9th, in this favoured part of Somersetshire, if I possibly could.

The reader may be curious to know who my esteemed informant is, and I have no objection to take him a little into my confidence. I have for years been in the habit of marketting for myself. It is a custom I have acquired, and I should not think it Saturday if I did not purchase my own provisions for Sunday. I like to loiter about amongst the stalls, and select my own small stock of provisions, and have a gossip with one old gudewife or another, whom I can recollect for years, for there are many homely honest faces there that have been familiar to me for almost a quarter of a century, under (I verily believe) the same black or grey beaver bonnet; and to my mind neither face nor head gear seem to have changed since that time. My oldest and most esteemed acquaintance, however, is Mistress Jenny K ———, "the mother of the market," and there is not one of my readers, who is in the habit of catering for themselves, who will not easily recognise my worthy friend, even under my meagre description. She is "Jenny K ———" to most of her familiars and friends, but my father, who was an old-fashioned man, never permitted any of his family to call people by

their bare Christian names, and fully convinced of the propriety of his advice I have continued to observe it, and to "Master" and "Mistress" every one beyond a certain age, however long I may have had the honour or pleasure of their acquaintance. Mistress Jenny's "standing" is always the first I visit on a Saturday morning, and I verily believe I should not be comfortable for the following six days, if I missed her honest face and portly person from the side of the piled-up butter, eggs, and pork (the latter fair as the fairest lady in the land), and all adorned for the most part with a sprig of evergreens or a bunch of flowers, looking as new as a May morning, and redolent with the freshness and bloom of Moreton Farm. Mistress Jenny, too, is, I believe, as glad to see me as I am her, and from a good pair of lungs and a sound heart comes the welcome which she gives the "old gentleman," as first wiping her honest hand in her apron she lays hold of mine with a cordiality of grasp, which tells me that truth and sincerity are not yet clean gone from the world. Mistress Jenny ought to be a Queen, only I would not miss her from her place in the market, to furnish the best court in Europe. She is fond of a little chat, and so am I, and we have many a long "spell" together: I am her only newsmonger, and I tell her when a King dies, or corn rises, or an old citizen, whom she has remembered like myself for years, is gathered to his fathers. I never, however, thought it necessary to communicate the *important* secret to her that the "old gentleman," who had the couple o' pound of butter and the little basket of fresh eggs from her almost every week, was the Church-Goer; and it was, therefore, with some little surprise I heard her upbraid me last Saturday with never telling her I was the "ould gossip that went round on a bit o' a poney to the country churches." "But never mind," she continued, "I'll forgive thee if thee'lt come to Compton Martin to-morrow, and hear Parson Brown, and I'll give thee and the little horse as much provender as either can stow away."

"It's a bargain, Mistress Jenny," said I. "What's the hour of service?"

"It was eleven last Sunday,"

"Then, I'll be with you at half-past ten. And now what's butter to-day?"

Mistress Jenny subsequently offered to drive me out the same night in her cart, and give me a bed at the farm if I liked. But where I go, if possible, there I wish John Bunyan (like Ruth) to go also, so I started a quarter before eight on Sunday morning. I need not talk to the reader about the ascent to Dundry, for I think I have tired him on that point before; but it was much colder now than when I climbed it in summer, and I kept my nose deep set in my comforter until I had passed Chew Stoke a half-a-mile: and here I began to think it was nearly time I heard the peals of Compton Martin: for there stood the church full in front of me on the side of the hill, and the Gothic parsonage peeping out from amongst the leafless trees, but no sound of Sabbath-going bells reached me. "Can you tell me, my excellent friend," said I to a good-looking farmer who passed me, "the hour of Service at Compton Martin?" "It was half-past nine *this* morning, Sir," said he, "as Mr. Brown had to go over and do duty at (I think he said) Nempnett."

"Then I have had my ride for nothing," said I, "for it is now half-past ten. Service was at eleven o'clock last Sunday; pray how do the parishioners become acquainted with these changes, if Prayers shift from one hour to the other in this way?"

"He sends round the clerk to our houses on Saturday or some other day during the week."

"Well," thought I, as I paused in doubt as to what I should do, "Mr. Brown, if you have two churches to serve you ought to keep a curate: but I suppose as the clerical phrase is, Compton Martin 'is too poor to carry double.'"

My friend seeing my indecision, said, "If you turn back you will be in time for Prayers at Chew-Stoke, Sir." I thanked him for his advice and turned back,

and soon heard old Bilby's beautiful bells pealing out from Chew tower, which stands so picturesquely amongst, and "bosomed high" by, patriarchal yews. I passed the brook and great village grinding-stone, were they sharpen every thing that grows blunt, (but their wits), and the parish poor-house, which was just such a one as the poet Crabbe describes, and looked like a monument to the 43d of Elizabeth; and the parsonage, which is a nice old little Gothic dwelling. Altogether Chew-Stoke is a truly English picture of rural scenery, situate in a well-watered, well-wooded, and well-sheltered vale, and would, I think, make a most pleasing subject for a pretty painting, with its venerable church, its "yew trees' shade," its richly battlemented tower, and its clear stream running by its green lanes and amongst its gardened cottages—

"And I thought, if there's peace to be found in this world,
The heart that is humble might seek for it here."

Having got a temporary standing for John, I proceeded to the church. As I entered the churchyard the bell ceased. Not to be too late, I hurried towards the south porch, and—*met the congregation coming out!* Bless my soul, thought I, here's another disappointment! "Are prayers over my good lad?" said I to the first of a school of boys in blue coats, breeches, and black stockings and bands. "No, Sir," replied the lad, "there are none to-day; the parson's taken very bad." I next saw the rector's son, Mr. Wayte, jun., (whose grandfather, by the way, was a very old friend of mine, and for years I was in the habit of hearing him at Maryport); to him I applied, and he confirmed the unfortunate intelligence; his father had been seized with a sudden indisposition, which rendered it quite impossible for him to quit the house: he regretted if I had come to church, that I should be disappointed. I need not say, that I felt still more for the cause, and expressed myself to that effect; though Moore's "Irish Gentleman in search of a

Religion" was hardly more perplexed than I, by my two ineffectual attempts in quest of prayers on one Sunday. However, as I had ridden so far, I did not wish to go back without seeing something; so I asked permission to view the church, which was granted me. The tower is the best part of the edifice; the interior is plain and poor, though there are one or two good windows in the south aisle, which is separated from the nave by a row of arches, the pillars of which are dreadfully chopped away and mutilated. Near the altar, in a kind of open cupboard, are two old tomes (1651), "Annotations on the Bible;" the Book of Malachi was open, which was the last, I suppose, that required elucidation. From the boards placed against the walls, it would seem that the departed parishioners of Chew Stoke have not forgotten the poor, the bequests, for such a place, being very considerable; the school before alluded to, for educating and clothing a number of boys, being well endowed. The church is dedicated to St. Andrew.

There is a rude organ loft, and a little instrument you may grind or finger. The west entrance is closed, and the lower portion of the tower converted into a vestry-room. In this little apartment is a plain mural tablet to the memory of Bilby, the celebrated bell-founder, who, as well as his son, cast some of the finest peals in the West of England. He resided before his death in Chew Stoke, the peal of which, at least some portion of it, is, I think, a present from him; he lived close by, so that for years he had the pleasure of hearing his own handiwork each Sunday morning,

"Wake with Sabbath voice,
The sleeping echoes of the wooded vale."

While I was yet reading Bilby's monument, the school-master came in and invited me to accompany him to the school and examine the boys. It was just the thing of all others I desired, so I readily accepted his offer, and by way of preparation began to turn over the Church Catechism in my own mind, for, like many

other things, my youthful learning evidences a manifest tendency to rust. On my way to the school I met a young woman with her Prayer Book and pattens in hand, and as she was going churchward, I thought I'd save her a hundred yards or so by telling her there would be no service to-day, and the reason why. She seemed concerned, but said smartly enough, it was well she was not going to be married, or she should be sadly disappointed.

When I had got nearly the whole way to the school, and half way through the Catechism in my own mind, we were overtaken by Mr. Wayte, jun., who said he was going to read as much of the morning service as a layman might to the children, and I could join: I said, with pleasure; but first I should like to examine the children, as the master was evidently desirous I should do so.* Mr. Wayte, jun., however, did not seem to understand me; or if he did, was not anxious for my interference, for having reached the school, he mounted the desk at once, and commenced with a hymn. There were two or three other persons besides myself and the children (some thirty boys and girls) present; and for rude simplicity at least nothing could exceed our worship in that low-roofed apartment, amongst old forms and moth-eaten and knife-marked desks. It would have been more impressive, however, had it been shorter, for my young friend read the Litany, though both I and the schoolmaster were anxious to commence the examinations. The layman, however, was obdurate, and when prayers were over, it was too late to think of anything but Mistress Jenny K——, and Moreton Farm, and my promised dinner.

My friend the good looking farmer informed me that Mr. W., jun. was intended for the Church, "when they smoothed un down a bit, and knocked off a few more knots or so."

* The schoolmaster, I subsequently learned, looked upon me in the light of a patron, as it appears I, with others, signed his recommendation for the post which he now occupies.

Neither boy nor girl could I see about the homestead at Moreton Farm on my arrival ; so being conscious of a hearty welcome, I helped John to a stall in the byre myself. How quiet and completely at rest seems every thing about a farm-yard on Sunday : the plough laid down on its side, and the cart thrust away under the shed, and no sound but the munching of the housed cattle as they chewed the cud, or the occasional flutter of the barn-door fowl, as they pecked among the scattered seeds and chaff. John provided for, I had little difficulty in finding my way into the kitchen, and there, seated on the semi-circular high-backed settle by the capacious fire-place, with her esteemed and worthy goodman, I found my friend Mistress Jenny K— (in her old market beaver bonnet.) The back of the settle was turned to the door, so I came on them unawares, and it was not until I had taken a survey of both and the apartment, that they were conscious of my having entered. There was a fine sea coal and log fire down, which blazed and crackled, and shed a ruddy lustre on every thing around, in that cleanly, comfortable, and well-kept kitchen, making the rows of polished pewter plates, on the dresser shine with a brilliancy that beat her Majesty's best silver service, and lighting up a hundred curious culinary articles, in the surface of which you might see yourself, and which hung upon hooks, and rested upon shelves round about. But pleasant as every thing looked, Mistress Jenny and the goodman were the most interesting objects in that little cheerful apartment ; before them was a small round table, on which lay a Bible and large Prayer Book, from which the farmer was reading, while an old setter dog, stretched on a mat which had been placed for him in the ingle or great recessed fire place, seemed to watch them with an almost intelligent affection and interest.

“ And certes in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind.”

said I, taking the outstretched hand of Mistress Jenny,

while a welcome, broad and manifest, beamed from her good-natured face. If an "honest man's the noblest work of God," as they say he is, my friend Farmer K., who rose from the settle as soon as he saw me, taking off his spectacles as he did so, and laying them down on the still open Prayer Book before him, is not very low in the list of created things. I did not care to enquire whether they had been at church that morning, or whether Mistress Jenny, tired from her journey to Bristol and back again, and her long stand in the market on the previous day, chose rather to have her prayers at home with the good man by the fireside, than walk across in a cutting easterly wind to Compton Church; for had they, I might perhaps have lost this, as perfect a picture of domestic comfort, grateful contentment and attachment as I think I have seen. "Now, bless my heart, if it aint glad to see thee," said Mistress Jenny, looking at me with a face beaming with gratification, as I took up my seat in the corner of the ingle opposite them; "it was kind of you to keep your word," then raising her voice so as to be heard in another apartment, she called out, "Patty, lay the cloth." Reader, you know those lines of Burns's, "John Anderson, my jo, John," more full of nature and feeling to my mind than any other I know. I have often admired them, but I never understood them until I sat opposite this estimable and venerable couple on Sunday last.*

"From scenes like these old England's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad."

And you may depend upon it, you modernizing philosophers and theorists, there is nothing more conducive

* "John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And monie a canty day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo."

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to truth and happiness, than the old fashioned tranquillity to be found in the farm-house, when the Church Prayer Book and Bible are companions of the fireside.

I had just tasted of my friend's hospitality when the snow began to fall heavily, and the little pensioner robins came to the casement, and, perching on the sill, and peeping in through the glass, waited like tiny mendicants at a monastery gate for their accustomed dole, and to them Mistress Jenny dispensed her bounty with no niggard hand.

It was a pleasant contrast was the snug little apartment, and its clean swept and bright hearth and my cozy ingle corner, with the scene outside; but I confess, as the great flakes fell obliquely across the window, I could not relish the idea of re-climbing Dundry-hill on John Bunyan's back in such a naughty night. My simple friends would have me stay, but as I knew it would be a night of intense uneasiness to my landlady (good soul) if I did not return, I even faced the road with as bold a heart as broad cloth could give one, and, long before I came to the summit of Dundry, what between the dreariness of the scene and the continued fall of the snow, and John's feet constantly "balling" (I think they call it), I thought I should have met with the fate of the "Babes in the Wood," and have my obsequies sung by the shrill grey plover on that lonely hill. Indeed, the leafless trees as I passed beneath them seemed to stretch out their gaunt white arms as if to warn me back: but, Heaven be thanked, I got home safe in time to relieve the anxiety of my landlady, and have a cup of warm tea.

Abbott's Leigh.

JOHN BUNYAN (the Pilgrim) in his Experience, and I think in his Progress, talks of being "put to the plunge!"* The low state of the water at Rownham-Ferry, on the morning of my visit to Leigh, imposed upon John Bunyan (the quadruped) the necessity of following the precept, if not the precedent, of his pious namesake. The boat was moored in the centre of the stream, now shrunk to the width of little more than a mill course, and a plank on either side enabled me to pass over dryshod; but John was compelled, not however without much apparent reluctance on his part, to take to the water and ford it. As the current ran rippling between his legs and up to his belly, he seemed frightened, but, once on *terra firma*, he shook the water from his sides, like dew-drops from the lion's mane, making the stirrup-irons clash together, and ring again like hammer and anvil, as he did so. Two public-houses, like Sestos and Abydos, stand on either bank, and I have no doubt occupy the site of some ancient hostelries, where the physical comforts of those who have to cross that way were for centuries provided for.

Some milkmen, returning from Bristol with empty cans, made their passover with me, and old John, the boatman, having nothing to do but receive the money, had a word of gossip with each. When not colloquially engaged, my old Charon turned his attention to

* "Being 'put to his plunge' about this."—*Southey's Life of Bunyan*.

the contents of a well-thumbed *Weekly Dispatch*, and thus by snatches collected and communicated knowledge such as it was. When I inquired if he got time to go to church, he turned his pimpled face towards me, and, with a kind of under-growl, seemed to express his wonder at any one being so "soft" as to ask the question. The ferry belongs to the Dean and Chapter of Bristol : it is the same by which the "mitred Abbots" of St. Augustine used to pass over of old to their country-house at Leigh, and I think the Collegiate Corporation, when they let the tolls, ought to have made it a stipulation with the parties taking them that sufficient men should be employed to enable each to attend prayers once at least on the Sabbath. Anciently if the boatman did not get mass, he sometimes got the Abbot's blessing *in transitu* ; but there is little chance of a casual benediction now, as neither Dr. Lamb nor any of his half-dozen Canons pass that way, or use the ferry, unless perhaps once in the seven years, when Sir John Smyth gives a dinner party.

In Roman Catholic times there was a little chapelry at Rownham, that Religion, with all its corruptions, never neglecting to provide a place of worship, where a handful of persons were likely to congregate together. Were a church there now, I think I should be disposed to pause on the way, for the hill is almost enough to frighten one from pursuing the journey, and the immense fence of stone and mortar, with which my excellent friend, Peter Maze, has girded his dwelling, by shutting out the prospect on one side, does not at all add to the attractions of the ascent. It is all very well for his recluse neighbour, the solitary Baronet, to shut himself inside his high walls and strong gates with his deer and pheasants, but my old acquaintance, the honest merchant, ought to let the world see a little more of him, and allow us to turn our tired gaze from these gibbet-like structures intended for the Suspension Bridge, to the green and sunny slopes that encircle his residence.

The reader, who has often walked to Leigh, will surely recollect *Beggars' Bush*, the ancient whitethorn on the road side, once the shelter of the mendicant pilgrim from the noonday sun, and now supported by a friendly prop in its venerable and declining old age. Near this he will also recollect, if he be as old as I am, a bridle-road diverging to the village: it was this way, I have little doubt, the mitred Abbot, as he rode on his richly caparisoned mule to his country-house, used to take, and I have often pictured to myself the group of suffering and afflicted mortals waiting under the shelter of the whitethorn for the passing of the holy dignitary, that they might fall at his feet, or lay hold of his embroidered footcloth, and solicit his benediction and benevolence. Superstition is, of course, an indefensible quality, but it is a picturesque one; and our Popish ancestors—the humble-minded poor of them especially—had a habit of devout and lowly deference to those whom they belived God's ministering servants, which it would be no harm if we participated in a little more than we do. One of the extremes, to which our boasted enlightenment tends, is irreverence; and the present age is far too prone to run to the opposite of what we call superstition, and divest both the clerical character and the sacred temple of those proper associations and prestige, which distinguish one from the ordinary man, and the other from the ordinary building.

This same bridle road (which I recollected so well in my young days,) occurred to my mind as I passed Beggar's Bush; so, wishing to refresh the pleasant memories of "auld lang syne," as well as to save time, I thought to turn John's head that way, but was not a little disappointed, and I think indignant, to find that, as well as the footpath to the village within the plantation, closed to the public. This is another of the incidents by which we trace the progress of enlightenment: pleasant "primrose footpaths" through green fields, and which had existed from almost immemorial

time, and were not merely refreshing to the wayfarer, but dear to the villager, are suddenly discontinued; stiles built up, and the pedestrian thrust out on the dusty road, and warned off by boards, threatening all manner of terrible punishments and prosecutions "according to law" to the trespasser. Trespass! it is only of late that it has become an offence: it was no "trespass" when for centuries the peasant child hunted the butterfly, and the village maiden plucked the cowslips along its path. I believe these little matters have more to do with the state of society than we wot of. The great web of social happiness is made up of very minute threads; and I think the green lane and pleasant footway through the fields, when the tread of the passenger started the lark from amongst the long grass, and sent him soaring towards heaven, trolling his gushing song as he ascended, was amongst the many little things that tended, with no loss to the great, to make the lowly happy. And when I hear of late years the poor accused of becoming less respectful, I sometimes think it is the rich that have grown more selfish. I can easily see how these apparently petty matters may particularly affect the city mechanic, who, coming out to enjoy the country air in his old and pleasant haunts, after six days toil in a crowded town, suddenly finds on some Sunday his favourite pathway closed against him, and turns into the next beer-house, it may be, to grumble in sullen discontent against the great who "begrudged him," as he will tell you, even that little enjoyment.*

Whose fault it is I cannot say; but as I went forward I met with one of the ancient villagers, who informed me, on my expressing my surprise and displeasure at what I saw, that it was the common report of the parish at the time when the footpath was closed, that it was effected (at least so I understood my venerable

* Here I would call the attention of those concerned to the neglected state of the stile and pathway leading to my old favorite walk through Nightingale Valley.

informant to say,) mainly by three of the Suspension-bridge Commissioners, by virtue of some mischievous and latent clause in the Act of Parliament, whereby these men were empowered, not merely to mar the scenery which Heaven and nature had made so beautiful, but to thrust people out of their pleasant haunts in the green fields. My friend mentioned the names of the trio, and I was not at all surprised to learn that they were three of the greatest brawlers for popular rights, liberties, and so forth, in the neighbouring city; for we find that the loudest to talk are the last to feel for the humble. But what sympathy has your radical with nature?—what appreciation of pleasant fields and primrose paths? I would any day prefer your good-natured simpleton to your unfeeling sage: long-headed, cold-hearted, there is neither soul nor sentiment, in the “absolute wisdom” of the latter; everything is as it is—nothing has associations for him; one way is as good as another; and

“The cowslip at the river’s brim
A yellow cowslip is to him,
And it is nothing more.”

I should, I believe, have ridden brimful of indignation to the very church door, if it had not been for the soothing effect which its peculiarly sweet peal of bells had upon me, charming away my choler as they chimed across the intervening landscape to meet me with their soft Sabbath greeting. After they had rung for about a quarter of an hour their pleasant music ceased, and the large bell alone took up the task, tolling forth for the like period as though for a funeral. On arriving at the church I inquired of the clerk, an old man, why this sepulchral-toned bell, of all the six in the tower, was employed to call the parish to the cheerful service of a church which invites us to “come before His presence with thanksgiving, and ~~show~~ *show* ourselves *glad* in Him with psalms;” and he informed me that it had been done now for some years, at the desire of the vicar, who wished that on his road from his

town residence he might hear the bell, and regulate the pace of his steed accordingly. I may here remark, that I passed him on the way : he was on a little bay horse, and in a brown study, so I did not interrupt him, especially as John was a far better walker than his quadruped.

From the road immediately overlooking the little village there is a beautiful view ; the broad waters of the Severn expanding like a sea in the back ground, and the red stone tower of the church, with its fine old patriarchal yew tree (which has seen so many of the "rude forefathers of the hamlet" laid down to sleep beneath its shade,) standing out amongst pleasant dwellings to the right. Close by the gable of the quiet little country inn, the *George*, are the parish stocks, or *Castata*, as Hudibras heroically calls them—

"In close Castata shut. past hope
Of wit or valour to elope."—(*Part 2, Canto 1.*)

It is very odd, but I seldom see a pair of stocks without wishing to put some one in them, as it is with regret one sees so interesting and venerable a relic of a past penal code become a dead letter, and fall into perfect disuse. So much for modern prison discipline ; tread-mills, and silent systems, and solitary confinement, and so forth, have done away with ducking-stools and stocks, and other time-honoured monuments at once of the wisdom and wickedness of our ancestors. Occasionally when I have seen these little round holes, which seem to invite a pair of legs to occupy them, looking so disconsolate at having nothing to do, I have been almost tempted myself, like Lord Camden, to take a seat, if but for a few minutes, to keep them in practice, did I only know where to get the key, as I perceive there is a padlock to the one at Abbott's Leigh ; the clavicler of the parish church being also, I suppose, the clavicler of the parish stocks. I should like to know from the village antiquary to whom the pair of legs which last adorned this wooden structure appertained, as it has not apparently been put into

requisition for years; though if I were by when the Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol rated the churchwardens of this parish at the last visitation, I think I should have suggested its present unemployed, but still effective condition, and the eligible opportunity it presented as a favourable medium for the enforcement of episcopal penalties, and the punishment of remissful wardens.

In the churchyard, which occupies a most picturesque situation, are the steps of an ancient cross, and the fine old yew tree before alluded to. Close adjacent is the parsonage house, (now, I understand, let to a layman,) most judiciously placed, and commanding a noble and beautiful view—just such a house, were I a parson, where I should like to live, and have my pleasant little library looking down on the Severn, and there write sermons and read Jeremy Taylor, and Hooker, and Bull, and Waterland, during long summer evenings, rendered more lovely by the scene. Nevertheless, I assure the Rev. Martin Whish, I am coveting neither his parsonage nor his living.

The church is a plain though venerable looking structure; and the interior, with the exception of the chancel, is in a primitive and almost rude state of simplicity: it consists of a nave, two side aisles, and a chancel, which last has considerably more pretension to decoration than the other parts of the building. At the west end there is a gallery, and in that gallery there are a big fiddle, (I believe a double bass,) a flute, and, I think, a bassoon, together with sundry persons who perform on these musical *implements*, severally and respectively—I wish I could add respectably; but the singing, which on the whole is only indifferent, is silently surrendered by the congregation to the parish choir, who, of course, do their best; and if people will not sing themselves, they must even be satisfied with the way in which those do the business, to whom, in their spiritual laziness, they have deputed it. The mural tablets, I perceive, have lately been cleaned,

and the letters newly picked out with black, Who the devout Old Mortality was who performed this work, I cannot say; but he deserves thanks for preserving the memories of the departed from the obliteration of time; and his example might, I think, be meritoriously followed by other churchwardens. In the chancel are monuments to the Norton and Trenchard families, who successively owned and occupied Leigh Court. Nearly confronting each other are tablets of two very opposite men, in more senses than one: that of Sir George Norton, the very flower of a family celebrated during centuries for their chivalrous loyalty and High Church principles; and that to Trenchard, the author of a well known and ultra work, the *Independent Whig*. This Sir George Norton was he who so nobly sheltered King Charles the Second in his house, Leigh Court, until such time as he was enabled to provide means for his escape into France. It is somewhere recorded in the history of the period, that there were over twenty persons, of different ranks of life, connected with Norton's household, who knew the secret, and yet who never sought to betray it or their monarch, such "divinity did hedge a king" in the estimation of his devoted followers in those days. It is to be hoped the merry monarch, or the "mutton eating king," as Rochester called him, behaved himself better at Leigh than at Woodstock, and that no pretty Alice Norton led him for a moment to meditate a breach of the best laws of hospitality. Associated with Trenchard in the composition of the *Independent Whig*, was Gordon, the translator of Tacitus, who not only assisted his patron in the making of his book while living, but kindly married his widow when he died. Mr. Trenchard was also the author of *Cato*, so that taking a little liberty with the lines of Pope in the prologue to *Jane Shore*, we might say, by virtue of a somewhat curious coincidence, that

"Cato, the Sententious,
Left his wife to his friend Hortensius."

The Manor of Leigh was anciently part of the endowment of the Bishoprick ; but Paul Bush, first Bishop of Bristol, who got possession of it at the Reformation, soon after sold it (to his shame be it spoken,) thus being guilty in my opinion of a species of sacrilege, in wantonly alienating the property of the church. From the Norton family it descended by marriage to the Trenchards. The present possessor is Mr. Miles, who purchased it.

The parishioners of Leigh seem to go into church at all hours—a circumstance which was attended with some slight but still annoying interruption to the Vicar, on the occasion of my visit. During the reading of the Psalms a bevy of servants came in, making a considerable flutter, and noise, upon which the Vicar, unfortunately, though naturally, raised his eyes from the book to see who the offenders against the proprieties of time and place were, and, in so doing, lost his part by mischance, and, in trying to regain it and recover himself, got hold of the wrong verse ; as the clerk read the right one, they were very wide apart, so the Vicar to prevent further confusion, as the simplest remedy said, “Let us begin the Psalm again !” and again we began it, though we were nearly at the end before ; but we could not have a good thing too often. Now people ought to come in themselves, and make their servants come in earlier ; and, if I were the Rev. the Vicar, I should preach a sermon against late attendance ; though I could perceive he attributed the interruption in the present instance to the wrong cause, namely, the fidgetty habits of the school boys, who stood in front, for on subsequently going into the vestry he had one of them called to him to the door, and there apparently read him a lecture on the impropriety of his conduct, and condemned him to stand up by the pulpit rail during the communion service : immediately before the sermon, however, the little fellow was released. Had he condemned the three servant-maids to durance, there would be more equity in it. I would suggest to

the clerk, that instead of encumbering himself with the arduous and double duty of knocking the boys on the head and repeating the responses, he should transfer the long stick with which he is ever and anon appealing to youthful sinciputs, to some assistant, and apply himself entirely to the reading department.

The Vicar preached. The Rev. Martin Whish, who as well as being incumbent of Redcliff and Thomas, prebend of Sarum, and rector of Bedminster, is also Vicar of Leigh, has been for so long a time connected with Bristol, and must be so well known as a preacher, that it is almost a work of superogation on my part to describe him. His style is somewhat singular and eccentric; you have hardly had time to admire some beautiful and remarkable bit of divinity when you are struck with some odd incidental, colloquial remark, delivered, it may be in a rapid parenthesis, or slowly propounded in a solemn period. I have heard him, after involving himself for some time in abstruse reasoning, which I confess was not very clear to me, suddenly cut it short by telling his congregation that "that was a knock-me-down argument," but the only thing it seemed to knock down was a young lady's gravity who sat opposite me, and who, by way of preserving her propriety, was obliged to turn to the Thirty-nine Articles at the end of her Prayer Book. As I said before, however, in almost every sermon which I have heard him preach, there have been some scattered passages of much originality and beauty, but which, unless to an attentive listener, are often lost in the irregularity of the rest. The great curiosity, however, is the sermon itself, so far as paper and ink go. I should think that he has not used a complete, clean quire of post since his entrance upon the ministry, the greater part of his discourses being written on fly leaves of letters, backs of circulars, and Christmas bills, of unequal size and all shades, so as to remind one of a similar practice of Pope's, to which Swift slyly alluded in his "Advice to Grub-street Verse writers:"—

" Send them to *paper-sparing* Pope,
 And when he sits to write,
 No letter with an envelope,
 Could give him more delight."*

Nor is this the only singularity of the Vicar of Leigh's sermons: the pages do not appear to be written consecutively, for he will turn over half a dozen leaves at a time to one where the corner is turned down in a huge equilateral triangle, and from this he will read back, like a Hebrew book, and then make another skip and dive midway into the discourse, recalling to mind one's youthful researches in the *Sortes Virgilianæ*.†

The Vicar of Abbott's Leigh is a very kind-hearted man, but although the Bishop and, I believe, the Clergy of the Diocese, have been working at him for years, they cannot either coax or bully him into keeping a sufficient number of curates; and Abbott's Leigh, which is nearly four miles from Bristol, is without a resident minister, or even a regular clerical attendant, there being in two hundred and eight successive Sundays no less than one hundred and eighty strange clergymen: the parishioners having in fact on no given Sabbath morning any more definitive idea of who's going to occupy their pulpit that day, than of who's to preach at St. Paul's Cathedral—they have no notion from which cardinal point of the compass the minister is to come who is to preach to them, or what stranger the neighbouring city will send forth. Now, I wish I

* The original MS. of his Homer (preserved in the British Museum) is almost entirely written on the covers of letters, and sometimes between the lines of the letters themselves — *Nichols*.

† Perhaps the reader may be disposed to enquire how I became acquainted with the peculiar appearance of Mr. W.'s sermons. I will tell him: some years ago (full half a dozen), after the death of the Rev. Mr. Glover, of St. Paul's, Bedminster, I went one winter's morning to that church, when the Vicar preached: there were two pulpits then, one at either side, almost close to the galleries; from that at the south side the sermon was preached, and, as I sat immediately over him, I could see the composition, which was principally written on the backs of old letters and tradesman's bills, Dr. Doddridge, of whom the Vicar is very fond, endorsing more than one of the latter. I think it only fair to add that the annual accounts, as far as I could see, were all receipted.

could dispense with this lecture, for I have no desire, and I greatly dislike to be thought to wish, to press heavily on any clergyman, but this is really a case in which one—and I, like the rest of the world, fancy I have a duty to perform—cannot keep silent, though I confess I despair, when his Diocesan can do nothing, that my words can have any effect. But it is really melancholy to think, that a considerable parish like Abbott's Leigh should be left to a mere casual visit and a Sunday call. I have heard a clergyman speak about "*working*" two churches himself; now Abbott's Leigh is completely a "*worked*" church, and worked by strangers too, many of them excellent and devout men, I believe, but calling there neither in the capacity of incumbents nor curates. I can see no objection that Mr. Whish can have to the employment of a curate but the expense, and that is the last excuse which a man with four parishes and a prebendal stall ought to make, for leaving a place out of which he derives some hundreds a year, in a state of spiritual destitution. As I said before, I have no feeling but one of respect for the Rev. Martin Whish, with whom I have been acquainted for a quarter of a century; but I cannot abstain from reminding him of the awful responsibility (I say it with solemnity) which a man incurs in leaving a large parish with none to look after it. I need but glance at the possibility of one immortal soul being *lost* through the neglect attendant on *saving* the salary of a curate, to place the consequences of such economy in the most appalling light. I will say no more, but leave the matter now to the consideration of the Vicar, satisfied that matters have remained so long as they have, only because he omitted to give them that serious consideration which they deserved.

Lympsham.

WHERE on earth is Lympsham? is possibly, curious reader, your first enquiry, and I pardon the question, though in these times of travelling enterprise and railroads, one ought hardly to be excused for being ignorant of any or every turn on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho—when tourists tell us they meet children with London nursery maids playing bo-peep round the corners of the principal Pyramid—

“Or, flying to the eastward, see
Some Mrs. Hopkins taking tea
And toast upon the wall of China.”

Lympsham, however, is one of those places you would hardly find if you did not look for it: I mean, it is thrust down so far into the westward out of the way, that unless, like me, you had a special invitation, 'twould never suggest itself to you. A railroad runs through the parish, but there is no terminus nearer than Weston; and as for stage coaches or guard's horn, I don't know when or if ever there were such things heard there.

I have no doubt that the printer has placed me on horseback as usual at the top of this paper, but the truth is I found my way from Weston to Lympsham in the interior of a fly. It was one of those occasions when John Bunyan is allowed to remain idle in his stall, and eat his hay and corn without doing anything for it. The morning was cold and squally, with occasional sleety showers, and the snow was still lying about unthawed in the ditches, so that it was not until I reached the top of Uphill, when the sun breaking

out from the chilly grey clouds for a few moments seemed to call my attention to the scene, that I could muster courage enough to let down the glass and look out; and certainly it is a sight almost worth catching cold for—the Channel seemed as broad and bright as if it were not three parts mud; and Bream-hill, and many a bold headland, ran out like great bullies into the sea, as if to meet and repel it. But every one must know the ground as well as I do. I cannot fancy there is one who takes up this paper, who has not at some time or another been for a month or so in summer to inhale the fine sand and sea breezes in this locality, and ride donkeys to every eminence in the neighbourhood, for the benefit—of those who hire them out. On the right of the road, then, I need not say, are Uphill new church, and Uphill old—the former built by Mr. Wilson, of Bath, the latter by the Devil. I only state the general account in the country; and as half the history, especially of heroic ages, is founded on tradition, I am not the man to impugn such authority; I may add, however, that Mr. Wilson's design seems to have greatly the advantage of that of his Satanic majesty, who, judging from the specimen here given, certainly does not seem to shine in architecture, though Southey, in his *Painter of Florence*, represents him as possessed of taste. The new structure is a very handsome one, and does credit to the author: it was built principally by private subscription and from the sale of pincushions, the proceeds of more than one bazaar having gone towards its erection. The Father of Lies does not seem to have had any extraneous or friendly aid of this kind in his undertaking; but if the story be true he accomplished the work himself, by his own individual exertions, and in opposition both to the patrons and the parish, who wished, and for a long time persisted, in building the church at the base of the hill, but the work they did by day was regularly removed at night, by their obstinate and indefatigable foe, further up; until at length, tired of so unequal a

controversy, where their antagonist had labour for nothing, the mortals gave in, and Belzebub had the day and his whim. To prevent the recurrence of so unpleasant a circumstance and so unseemly a dispute, the new church has been erected on the summit, and at present a very good understanding, from what I can learn, seems to subsist between all parties.

Uphill is a little Pisgah in its way for prospect : on the north (I think it is the north, but I really am a very bad judge as to the points of the compass) you look back upon Weston, wearing quite an air of elegance in the distance—I say nothing of a nearer view : and on the south, stretching far beneath, is one of the most extensive tracts of campaign country I think I have seen, with the river Ax winding for miles through it, and looking like some huge shining serpent as, glistening in the occasional sun gleams, it glided along in its tortuous course. Immediately under you is Bleadon, and thence, some mile or mile and a half distance, may be seen “sloping its head,” as Macbeth says, amongst a clump of trees, the handsome embattled, but leaning tower of Lympsham Church. If I had time when passing Bleadon, I think I should have looked in to my friend Parson Williams, and told him how freely people talk about his parish, and how frequently they refer to it in familiar comparisons : the very sparrows which perch upon the old cross seem to twitter their remarks ; and the rooks that crowd cawing about the pinnacles of the church are no where else so significantly loquacious. A set of open mouthed, talkative, scandalous fellows are these same rooks ; and I sometimes think, as they wing their way from parish to parish, and alight in garrulous coteries on the summit of one tower after another, they amuse themselves in canvassing the merits of the ministers of the various churches at which they call.

Lympsham is divided from Bleadon by Hobbe's Boat Ferry, so called from the fact of there being no ferry there. The river, it is true, once ran by, but an act

of parliament was passed empowering it to take another course, of which privilege it promptly availed itself. Having got within the parish, along the main road, and from every bye-road, came colburs, cars, and all kinds of rural vehicles, passing me and well laden with people on their way to church; while the bells, ringing loudly and clearly, gave an air of animation to the scene which one does not generally witness on such occasions in the country. There were no phaetons nor fine carriages, with bright liveries or smoking bays; it is true, and my fly was the only thing that would bear even a limited comparison to a landeau; but from many a market cart, now applied to Sunday uses, might be seen blooming faces and rustic finery, of the fascinations of which the fair proprietors had no poor opinion. There is no man who has a greater abhorrence of, or contempt for, the impertinencies of the road than I have: and I am happy to say, as I raised my hat gravely and respectfully to each church-going group or party as I passed, they returned the salutation in their frank and friendly manner, which showed they had no suspicion of any impudent freedom on my part. 'Tis evident, said I, no stage coach passes this way, with bagmen to abuse the pleasant courtesies of life, for people are not ashamed to reciprocate simple civilities from the inoffensive wayfarer.

The church, church-yard, school-house, and pretty parsonage of Lympsham, lie all together, and seem, in their smiling contiguity and repose, one sacred homestead: there are no stiff walls about them; and a light rustic paling, or a wire fence, or a row of evergreens, is the only thing that divides one from the other, or all from the public. The parsonage is an exceedingly pleasing and picturesque object in the view, with its long front and its pretty porch, and its oriel windows, its old trees, and its little glimpses of greensward between; while there is an air of elegance and competence beside so tempting, that were comfort all a man sought for in the ministry, there are few laymen from

this to that who would not be quite willing to exchange places with the rector of Lympsham. He was standing under his own porch in gown and band as I drove by; and on the fly pulling up, he came towards me; but seeing it was neither Sarum nor Chancellor Law that alighted, but an old man in a brown coat, he drew back again.

Nothing can be more creditably kept than the churchyard; it is literally pretty. Just as you enter, there is a little round flower-plot with a laburnum tree in the centre. The graves are not ranged together in stiff and formal rows; but they lie apart with a pleasing irregularity, and that rustic simplicity and repose which, in many country church-yards, rob the Grim King, to our imagination, of half his terrors. It was just such a spot as Gray might have written his *Elegy* in. "What is more pleasant," says Professor Wilson, in one of his truly beautiful tales, "than the meeting of a rural congregation in a church-yard before the minister appears? What is there to shudder at in lying down, sooner or later, in such a peaceful and sacred place, to be spoken of frequently on the Sabbath amongst the groups of whom we used to be one, and our low burial spot to be visited at such times as long as there remains on earth any to whom our face was dear?" In my mind, attention to the church-yard is only second to attention to the church; and the peasant who does not take a deep interest in it, is devoid of proper sensibility. Every Sunday, as he passes through it to church—every week day, as he passes by it to his work—the thought ought to occur to him, that here he will one day rest, and within this very place when the last summons is heard, he shall awake. With the rural parishioners, this is the case more than with any other: there are few vicissitudes amongst them—few removals—few goings away; and the strong probability is, that they die where they have been born and lived, and that almost every day during their existence they see the spot destined to be their resting-place; and it is

only natural to think that they should care about the little solemn inclosure—"God's acre"—in which they are one day certain to have so enduring an interest.

At the East end of the church-yard is the parish school, and as I walked round the burial-ground I was tempted by the juvenile buzz that reached me outside to peep into this little hive. Independent of the regular master and mistress, there were some young ladies of the parish amusing themselves with a perfectly harmless attempt "to teach the young idea how to shoot." This school, which is a plain neat cottage-like building, was erected by the father of the present Incumbent, and bears upon it an inscription somewhat to that effect: the words are as well as I can recollect (I quote from memory), "*In gloriam Dei Salvatoris hujus paræchie Rector condidit.*" So grandiloquent a dedication, or commemoration, or whatever else you may choose to call it, seemed to me somewhat out of place in front of a plain little cottage. It would be more in keeping on Wells Cathedral or York Minster.

A comfortable looking man in a black gown showed me into a pew. It is not usual for country parishes generally to have sextons, but a sexton in a gown was certainly more than one expected to see in a little secluded place like Lympsham: but it was only in accordance with everything else I witnessed at, in, and about the church. Everything was done decently and in order, and there was manifest evidence of all those little attentions, which it is our bounden duty to see cared for in connexion with the sacred temple and the solemn worship.

I do not know when I have been in a country church with so large a congregation: it was not merely the pews that were filled, but the forms placed in the aisles were closely occupied also. I could not help thinking it was some special occasion. Indeed, several, I could see, were strangers like myself, for they looked about uncertain where to go, and more than that, when they got a place they seemed uncertain what to do—a

circumstance from which I concluded, as it subsequently turned out, that there was an unusual muster of Dissenters: few, if any of them, had Prayer Books, and all seemed ill at ease, though they affected to look with critical and judicial faces towards the clergyman. The Rector is one of the most active men I have ever seen in the reading-desk or pulpit, and, from what I learn, out of it too: he not only read the service and preached, but he led the singing and chaunting, both of which they did, and did well, without an organ: indeed, I never before heard such hearty general congregational singing—every one took their share, and a man with a bass voice somewhat more than his share. If anything there was too much singing: for the musical part of the service, I have often thought, is more exciting than edifying—it touches the ear more than the heart, and after it has subsided it is some time before the minds, especially of those who have taken an energetic part in it, are brought back to that calm and equable frame in which it is necessary to be in order to feel the simple, subdued, and chastened piety which breathes in all the prayers of the Church. St. Augustine himself seems to have had some misgivings on this point. He says in his Confessions (Book x. 49), “The delights of the ear had more firmly entangled and subdued me. But thou didst loosen and free me. Now in these melodies, which thy words breathe soul into, when sung with a sweet and attuned voice, I do a little repose. * * But this contentment of the flesh, to which the soul must not be given over to be *enervated*, doth oft beguile me, the sense not so waiting upon reason as patiently to follow her; but having been admitted merely for her sake, it strives even to run before her, and lead her. *Thus in these things I un-awares sin*, but afterwards am aware of it.” In the very next section he says—“At other times shunning over anxiously this very deception, I err in too great strictness; and sometimes to that degree I wish the melody of sweet music, which is used to David’s Psalter,

banished from my ears and the Church's too. * * * Yet when it befalls me to be more moved with the voice than the words sung, I confess to have sinned penally, and then had rather not hear music." Nearly in the same part he speaks of being more moved by "the things sung" than the singing.

The text was taken from 1st Cor., c. iv. 2, "Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." He opened with a most happy figure from the Revelations, alluding to the Angel who was represented as standing in the sun, and whose brightness was lost in the surpassing effulgence of the great luminary. So, he said, it ought to be with the minister of the church: he himself, and personal considerations connected with him, ought to be lost in the greatness and grandeur of the message with which he was commissioned; but there were times when a clergyman might be pardoned for speaking of himself, and the present was, in his opinion, such an one. He then read some passages from the Ordination Service, to show the solemn responsibilities he incurred in undertaking the cure of souls; and next proceeded to allude to some painful circumstances which had occurred in the parish, and with regard to which some portion, at least, of the congregation then present and the clergyman would not appear to be quite of one mind; but as he did not state what the difference was, and referred to it with evident pain and reluctance, and not without considerable excitement, I was left quite in the dark as to its nature, and was wearying myself with conjectures as to whether they had got up one of the surplice quarrels in the secluded village of Lympsham, or if there were a difference about tithes, or what. It was plain, however, that the "mild Arcadians" of the place, remote as they were, were not sufficiently so to escape all cause of strife. He pointedly alluded, too, in the course of his discourse, to some whom he had requested to attend there that day, and in contradistinction to his own flock, which latter he enjoined to

hold fast by their old faith. Those whom he addressed as invited, I had little difficulty in seeing, were my friends with long faces and without Prayer Books. Having dismissed this unpleasant subject, which he did with manifest relief to himself, the rector proceeded to preach on conversion, the necessity of which he enforced, but distinguished between it and conviction; and argued against its being a sudden or momentary change, induced by wild enthusiasm and excitement, but a gradual working of the heart, and maturing to good. He treated the subject with much force, judgment, distinctness, and penetration; and as an extempore preacher, I have not heard a more fluent one. He has much natural eloquence; and rapid and animated though he be, with language (and suitable and good language) at will, he seemed at times as though he could not give utterance quick enough to the "thick coming fancies" which crowded upon him. There is a kind, affectionate, friendly, and earnest manner about him, too, which gave you the impression of a man speaking to and amongst his own family; and from all I could learn this is completely the character of his intimacy and ministerial connection with his congregation. "He is the child of the parish, I might say, Sir," said a gentleman to me: "his father held the living before him, he was reared amongst us, he has grown up amongst us, he has been about in the cottages almost since he has been able to walk, and there is hardly an old inhabitant upon whose knee he has not sat when a boy; and thus (and backed by liberality, charity, and ample means, as he has been) has grown up that amiable and affectionate feeling which has made rector and flock as it were one family,"—an old and truly English parochial understanding which ought to exist every where. Like most fluent extempore preachers, however, the Rev. Mr. Stephenson has no idea whatever, apparently, of measuring time, for his sermon on the present occasion was full an hour and a half (!) A trial which no man has a right to

make of his hearers' patience. He made five or six main divisions of his subject, and four or five subordinate divisions of each of these again, with an exhortation to each: once or twice he told us we must not think of time, and certainly he set us the example by seeming perfectly unconscious of its course himself: in fact he was borne impetuously along by his own fluency and feeling. Considering the cause a little more length than usual was indeed admissible; but the sermon I heard on Sunday morning would, without exaggeration, have made three very good ones.

On leaving the church I was quite full of curiosity to know the cause of the marked, though to me unintelligible, allusions of the minister in the early part of his sermon. There was clearly a hitch some where; but where that was, I could not, for the life of me, guess. An elderly lady, who sat in the next pew to me, passed me in the moment of my anxious inquisitiveness. I apologised to her for interrupting her; but I said I was most desirous to know what unpleasant occurrence had taken place to interrupt the peace of the parish, and provoke the references the rector had made in the beginning of his discourse. "Why, Sir, they have been roaring—they have been ranting here, and turned Lympsham upside down with roaring for their sins."

"Then," said I, "your parish has been visited by some of those wild and erratic visionaries, which have sprung from the morbid extravagances and excesses of schism."

"Yes, sure, Sir," was her reply; "they have been preaching and groaning and reviving in a room, until, as Jem (I forget the name of her authority,) told me, the candles went out of their own accord; and they thought the Old One was in the room."

"Judging from the zeal of your own parish minister, madam, I should have thought that Lympsham was the last place where such extraneous aid could have been thought necessary."

"Yes, sure. To come to our parish, too, of all

others! Indeed if they visited Bleadon, one would not be so surprised."

In short, I learned from this earnest and elderly gentlewoman, that the parish had been suddenly struck as if with a religious panic. The morbid and wild feeling had been introduced by an itinerant, who got possession at once of some vacant room and a simple people's reason—a circumstance not unusual in this age and country, where, as the *Citizen of the World* says, "every man who has interest enough to hire a conventicle, may set up for himself, and sell a new religion." Already all the dissenters in the neighbourhood, and several of the simple portion of the Church congregation, were attacked by the epidemic; and the most singular thing of all was, that the very church schoolmaster and mistress were amongst the number; and not content with forcing and frightening themselves and others at this room into a state of ecstatic terror, they spread the mania amongst the children under their care, who went home to their parents frightened out of their little wits and crying, and on being questioned as to the cause of such unusual conduct, literally said "they were converted:" to so melancholy and morbid a pitch had people's minds been worked. But it appears that this spiritual phenomenon was not altogether unknown in this part of the country. About twenty years ago the same feeling passed like wild fire through nearly the same district, including Lympsham, Berrow, East Brent, &c., and turned people's senses for the moment, as it has almost done on the present occasion. It was a critically unfortunate circumstance, too, that just at the moment that it now made its appearance, the Rev. Mr. Stephenson was confined to his bed by a very serious illness: and only arose to find his parish, in which his heart was wound up, agitated by a religious fever and ferment. The Sunday when I heard him was the first on which he had preached since his illness; and he had, as I subsequently learned, sent round to request the attend-

ance of his dissenting parishioners, as well as his church congregation ; and this accounted for the curious and awkward apparitions I beheld. I heard there were several local preachers there ; and I have little doubt that, being a stranger, I was also taken for a "supply" to some neighbouring chapel.

I cannot say what the Rev. Mr. Stephenson has done with the schoolmaster and mistress, and to a nature like his, (which really overflows, as I have been told, and I have no doubt, with tenderness, clemency, and kindness), it must give great pain to act, as I certainly should act in the case ; for such people are clearly incompetent to the control of children when they cannot control themselves. For persons, too, attached to church schools to run after every wild visionary is unpardonable.

I speak plainly, and I wish to speak practically on the matter, for I believe that these "frenzied fits" have no claim to be called by the name of religion ; they are rather a delusion. The feeling that is caught in the contagion of a crowded room, when people are crying and groaning in crowds, and terrifying each other into fearful excitement by exclamations about eternal torments, cannot endure beyond the night : it is physically impossible for human nature to continue in such a fright—it is morally impossible for the mind to be kept in such a painful tension, and the fit is banished by the broad practical light of plain day. "The new sect weep for their amusement," said the *Citizen* : but real religion, the discipline of the heart, on the other hand, is cheerful, equable, and enduring, and is preserved safe amongst the bustle of the world, and the innocent admixture of society.

I have left myself little room to speak of the church, for I always go off (I don't know how it is) at a tangent on this subject. However, there is not much to be said about the church : it has a chancel, nave, and north aisle, and is neatly kept : there is a pretty painted east window, and a good roof to the side aisle, with

bosses bearing heraldic devices, &c.: the wood work of the pews, &c., are very badly painted in a paltry, domestic-dwelling kind of style. I have heard that the Rector (to his credit be it spoken) intends this year to expend a considerable sum of money on it; and if the repairs are made with judgment and taste, the interior of Lympsham Church may be as attractive as the environs. The tower, which is a handsome embattled one, owing to the base having given way at one time, inclines as much as two feet from the perpendicular.

I may here say that I attended prayers in the evening also, when the attendance was nearly as good as in the morning, and the sermon better.

There was an affecting circumstance which came under my notice on the occasion of my visit, and I can hardly refrain from mentioning it before I conclude this paper. There was an old man standing pensively by the west door as I entered, and he afterwards took up his place near me in the church, when I perceived him look with a wistful and sad, a regretful but an humble, glance towards the reading-desk. I felt impelled by an indescribable interest in him to inquire who he was, when I learned he was the late clerk. He had been dismissed for some error, cider was unfortunately on one occasion too plenty for him, and he had "fallen from the high estate," which he had occupied for twenty years. He was regretted and pitied by the Rector and parishioners, and (poor man) there was a touching air of sadness and penitence about him, and something like an appearance of conscious degradation, as he saw another occupying the post, and reading out of the great prayer-book which was his for near a quarter of a century. "A stranger filled the Stuart's throne," and the knowledge that his deposition was just did not deprive thought of its sting. Poor man, he still went to church, though I have no doubt every Sunday renewed the pang.

I have to thank some one—some kind heart I am sure, for a large slice of mothering cake. I am grateful for the gift, on account of the good feeling of which it is indicative: but the truth is, I furnished myself, in accordance with my old and annual custom, with a whole one. Long, long ago, when we were all at home, we had of course the mothering cake: death gradually thinned the circle, but the orbit of the cake continued the same—the family fell off, but the order that went to the confectioner's was undiminished: time contracted the little social ring, but it was a comfort to think he could not nip one of those luscious blossoms that flourished like crocuses in the snow, above the white expanse of powdered sugar. At length, one after the other having dropped away, my brother and myself found ourselves one Midlent Sunday a sort of solitary dual, confronting each other across six pounds of painted confectionary. He, too, followed the rest, and now, like Cuthon's snuff-box, which survived the eleven in the tale of the French Revolution, the mothering cake is annually forthcoming in its pristine proportions, though there is but one left to look at it.

It is a fact which every one's experience will confirm, that many men and women too, take a morbid pleasure in brooding over their solitude and sorrows; and I have sometimes thought the Roman was never so happy as when he sat on a broken column, and told the slave to tell his master that he saw Caius Marius sitting amongst the ruins of Carthage. Now, I don't confess to any such unwholesome feeling, but I do admit that the contemplation of my own loneliness at the recurrence of festive seasons, is not altogether without a kind of enjoyment. Zoroaster, the head of the Brahmins, is said to have smiled but twice in his life, when he was born and before his death; and I believe there are some worldly hearts that only open once in the year, and that on Mothering Sunday. And if they

do not open then, they are past praying for. On the Saturday evening previous to Midlent Sunday, I always walk round to the various confectioners in the city, and stand amongst or behind the group of people that gaze in at each window on the luscious array inside, for I take an interest in mothering cakes, and can even trace the progress of society and civilization in their embellishments: the rows of flowers around them are nearly the same, for blessed nature never materially changes, but it is the principal figure in the centre, that marks the course of time and the change of manners. When I was a boy no one thought of having a mothering cake without old Redcliff Church or the High Cross, or Bristol Cathedral were on it: now you have Opera dancers *poussetting*, or ladies and gentlemen polkaing, or some other modern gimcrackery, which shows the flimsy and unsubstantial spirit of the age. There was another circumstance that on the occasion of my present peripatetic visit to the confectioners' shops disturbed my comfort: there was a group of boys in front of my old friend Lucas's, in Redcliff-street, and with fingers pointed and lips watering, they seemed to be engrossed with the delicious display inside, when one of them separated himself slyly from the rest, and getting a sharp pebble dropt it into the ear of one of his most intent companions: the boy's want of sentiment shocked me, so I dealt him a smack of my silver-headed bamboo across the shoulders, to teach him more respect for the feelings and ears of other people the next time.

With this little adventure, and thanking my unknown friend once more for her kindness, I must conclude.

Berkeley.

My Lord Fitzharding despairs of ever being as great a man as Moses ; but this has not prevented him from trying to imitate Joshua, and tampering, not with the sun, but the parish clock.

I was informed that the service commenced at half-past ten, and a few moments before that time I rode into the Berkeley Arms. On reaching the churchyard, however, and looking up at the clock, I found it wanted a quarter to eleven, still the ringers were in the tower (which stands some twenty yards away from the church), "panting, pulling, hauling" as hard as Hookem Frere's heroes.

"How is this, my good man," said I to one of them, looking from the dial of my watch to the face of the parish oracle above me: "your clock is wrong."

"No, Sir," was his reply, "it's the Earl's time. He always has the clocks in Berkeley to go an hour, or an hour and a quarter, faster than those any where else."

"What right has he to mislead people," said I, with an Englishman's independence, "or to make Time go faster here than elsewhere: he'll find himself quite soon enough in the other world, without trying to hurry on the old fellow with the scythe and hour-glass."

"What right?" repeated my informant. "Because he likes it. That's his Lordship's one reason for everything, and I'd not care to be the man to ask him for a second."

"You're a prudent fellow," said I, "and I'll follow your example so long as I'm in Berkeley; but let me get back to Bristol, and if I don't give him a bit of my mind, scratch me out of your will."

But really this is a strange whim of his Lordship's, and if he were not too long headed a person to take the trouble of setting the clock with his own fingers (which I am told he does) for nothing, I should say it was done in the wantonness of authority, merely, like Dryden's tyrant, "to show his arbitrary power." We read, I think, in the *Tour to the Hebrides*, of a Highland chieftain, whose ideas of his own greatness were so sublime, that he had a horn blown as soon as he had dined, to intimate to the rest of the world that they might then go to dinner; and so his Lordship would seem to wish to have the start of his neighbours in time, and enjoy the noon a good hour and quarter before his friends. For my part, I wonder the Earl does not reverse his fancy, and thrust back the hour hand, instead of putting it on, humming all the while with Horace,

"Eheu fugaces! Posthume, Posthume,
Labuntur anni; nec pietas moram
Rugis et instanti senectæ
Afferet indomitæque morti."

I walked about the churchyard for full ten minutes. I never before was in such a poetical place, at least as far as the tombstones are an evidence of the public taste: every grave has a head-stone, and every head-stone has nearly half-a-dozen lines of hard-earned rhyme upon it. Nearly all Pope's epitaphs are to be found here, but chipped and chopped about a good deal, so as to suit person and purpose: and as the poorest party scorns to rest in peace without a heap of poetry above his head, on the principle, I suppose, of "*Placantur carmine manes*," the original import being some time expended, many have copied, picked, and plagiarized from their neighbours. On a white stone to the west of the tower were the words—

"Attend to me as you pass by
As you are now, so once was I,
As I am now, so you may be,
Therefore prepare to follow me."

Under this, some wag, who could crack his jokes even

beneath a Death's head and cross-bones, has written
in a bold haud, with a black-lead pencil—

“To follow you I'm not content
Unless I knew which way you went.”

Nearly in the centre of the churchyard is a neat
freestone altar tomb, erected over the remains of the
Earl of Suffolk's fool, with an inscription I think
(though I may be mistaken) by Swift—

“Here lies the Earl of Suffolk's fool,
Some call him Dickey Pierce,
His folly served to make men laugh
When wit and mirth were scarce.
But now, alas! he's dead and gone,
What signifies to cry,
For fools enough are still behind
To laugh at by-and-bye.”

Owing to my eyes not being so young as they once
were, I could not make out the date; the incident in
itself, however, had sufficient interest for me when I
reflected that there was interred one of a race formerly
found in every Baronial Hall, but long extinct. “Alas,
poor Yorick!” “Where be your gibes now? your
gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment that
were won't to set the table in a roar? not one now to
mock your own grinning? quite chapfallen?” Yet
like his jokes, which bit while they made men laugh,
Dicky Pierce's epitaph remains long after his soul has
fled to a world where the jester's and that of his noble
master's are equal, to rebuke the folly and frailty of
mankind.

While I yet meditated amongst the tombs, I could
see the congregation pass to the church along the neat
gravelled walks, and I don't know when I before noticed
such smartly dressed people in a small country town.
So many brilliant velvet bonnets, warm furs, and fine
gowns! I assure you it was quite gay, and I felt
almost ashamed of having brought only my second-best
snuff-colour with me; and perhaps it was this, or some
diffidence in my personal appearance, that made me
turn into the very next pew to the North porch as I
entered, but before I had time to sit down, I felt some

one tugging at my sleeve, and, turning round, I was accosted by a man who was, I suppose, a kind of sexton or beadle, and who civilly invited me to take a seat further up the church, as I should be very cold and uncomfortable (he assured me) there.

"I'll show the gentleman to a good place," said an old alms-woman coming up, So taking the conduct of me, she led me by a file of boys, who pulled their forelocks very respectfully as I passed to a pew in the centre aisle close by a great roaring fire, and immediately in front of the pulpit and reading desk, where I had a view of the building, and ample opportunities of seeing what a noble structure Berkeley must have been, and still might be made.

For extent and grandeur of effect it is quite cathedral-like, the spacious side and lofty central aisles being supported by rows of seven or eight finely pointed arches, springing from piers, for the most part clustered and with varied capitals, some of them exquisitely foliated, somewhat similar in character to those I have seen at the neighbouring church of Slymbridge. There is a large four-light window at the west end; and the chancel, which is commanding and well proportioned, is divided from the body of the church by a bold and peculiar stone screen. To the south of the chancel is the mausoleum or tomb chapel of the Berkeley's, where the bones of the more recent members of the family repose, the earlier generations resting beneath the groined roof of Bristol Cathedral. The predominating style of the structure is Early English, and if cleansed and restored it might, I think, be made one of the most imposing parish churches in the West of England.

The roof is wood, and from the centre aisle the drops were falling in profusion around me. This perhaps was owing to the penetrating nature of the thaw, there having been a frost the night before; still it was annoying, and must be to some extent injurious to the edifice. Not far from me a lady in a green velvet bonnet was obliged to take shelter in the next pew, her

head dress being more than once in imminent peril; and in the seat close to my side was a precise old gentleman with a lettered, neatly bound, fine papered Prayer Book, upon which a great gout of dark water dropped with a piteous splash, and defied his most energetic efforts to erase it with an Indian silk pocket handkerchief. In fact there were few pews in the centre aisle into which the drops were not falling thick and fast.

I had not been many minutes in my seat when the Rev. Seaton Kar entered the reading desk. The Vicar is a young man—I should say about thirty, or so—and his dark eye and aquiline features would give an expression of much intelligence to his countenance, if it were not that the careful and elaborate curl of his black whiskers, and the painful arrangement of his glossy hair, with other traits equally indicative of paramount attention to personal adornment, showed the presence of something not quite solid in character. Let me not be mistaken; I do not wish to see a sloven in the pulpit: on the contrary, I think a man is bound to pay a decent regard to dress and appearance on such occasions, but a parish priest spending a quarter of an hour in curling his whiskers before a toilette glass on Sunday morning, and paying minute attention to the aesthetics of dress, makes one wish once more for the old silver shoe buckles, black stockings and breeches, full fall vest, spacious cut coat, and shovel hat of the old country *clericus*.

The Vicar of Berkeley, however, is a "tasty" man in every thing: it is not merely that he reads well—he reads *splendidly*, and with evident pride in the accomplishment: it smacks, I should say myself, a little of the profession of elocution, without, however, "overstepping" the modesty of nature. I never heard a chapter better read than the First Lesson, though he had a slight cold, which I thought seemed to annoy him, as interfering with the modulation of his voice. There is a good choir and organ, and the *Vinite, Jubilate, &c.*, were not ineffectively chaunted. Indeed, every thing

seemed to be done so "decently and in order," that any stranger arriving at the Berkeley Arms in the evening, and attending prayers in the parish church on the following morning, without any previous knowledge of the place, would be disposed to say, from what he saw, that few parishes were more fortunate than Berkeley in its public services.

The sermon was from 1 Cor. 15, 19: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." I have heard the Rev. Francis Close, at Cheltenham, and seen him place his pocket handkerchief at one side of the pulpit cushion, and his watch at the other, but his mode of doing so was the act of a bungler compared with the courtly ease with which the Rev. Seaton Kar performed a similar feat. Unfolding his sermon before him, and touching the spring of a splendid gold hunting watch, he placed the precious chronometer with open case on his right, while from under the left fringe of the pulpit cushion peeped out a square of fine cambric; and these preliminaries completed, he commenced a finished and even forcible discourse, delivered with an elegance of style; action, and intonation which I have seldom or ever seen surpassed. The subject was appositely illustrated, and the necessity for a future state to reconcile all inequalities in this life, fully enforced; "otherwise how might the righteous repine when they saw a man, great in wealth and power and possessions, though far from eminent for his piety, surrounded with all this world can give for the gratification of the senses, descending, like a ripe shock of corn, in the fulness of years to the grave; while those who spent a life of patience and holiness, were dragging out their days in privation and suffering. It was the consciousness of a future state that supported them, and it was this conviction also that, like the handwriting on the walls of Belshazar's hall, often damped the festivity of the godless and the great." The watch and the handkerchief were appealed to occasionally; but considering it was a written sermon,

which the preacher could not conveniently add to or diminish, I fear a reference to the former at least was a piece of finical affectation, unworthy and out of place amid the great solemnities of the House of God: I cannot tolerate acting in the pulpit—a man should feel a weight of awful responsibility in such place, that ought to bear down everything like personal display. With this exception, however, nothing could be more apparently impressive than his *style*: there was no haste or seeming indifference—no hurrying through the service; on the contrary, he seemed to take a pride in the way in which he performed it, and read with the air of a man who knew he could read.

There were a good many present, but I was sorry Earl Fitzhardinge was not there, if it were only to hear how happily the figure about Belshazzar's feast sounded within the shadow of the feudal and embattled walls of Berkeley. His Lordship, however, as the naked flagstaff from the keep intimated, was not at home (which, with other things, will serve to account for my putting up at an inn), though had he been within his own domain the circumstance would not greatly conduce to increase the congregation, for I am assured by one who has been in the habit of attending the church for thirteen years, that he never saw his Lordship once within its precincts during that time. I make it a point every November to read all the accounts of the speeches delivered at the Colston commemoration; and this year, while seated in "my old wicker chair," I spelt through the proceedings at the Anchor, I saw by the address of the hon. member for Bristol that he spoke of the pride he felt in the consciousness of his ancestors having built so many churches. There is no doubt that they did, and I hope they had their reward, but I am sorry it was not also in his power to boast that their descendants were equally zealous in attending them.

I suppose, if the truth were known, his Lordship has not been in Berkeley Church for a quarter of a

century, (except to Dr. Jenner's funeral), and I should not be surprised that one of the main reasons of his absence is, that, as he knows his bones will one day lie there, he thinks he will have to spend quite enough of time within its borders when dead, not to trouble it more than he can help while living.

It may be all very well, my Lord, to have morning prayers at home in the baronial hall or the private chapel, (which of course, if you don't go to the public services, you have), but I think a great and powerful nobleman ought to use his parish church as something more than a kind of tomb-house for "the Capulets." What effect does he expect his example to have upon his dependents, his servants, and his tenantry—how does he expect that they will attend the church, when they know that their great feudal Lord has not been within its doors for perhaps twenty years? I am sorry for this; I declare I am, for I am no Radical: but a great admirer of aristocracy. I should think it a splendid thing if I had a long line of ancestors stretching back into by-gone centuries, until their grim faces could no longer be distinguishable in the mist of antiquity—or to have them hanging in armour and furred robes against old oak wainscotted rooms; but as I have neither, I like to admire them in others,—I like to run back in imagination to the stout old barons whose bones are now filling the Berkeley mausoleum, yet who long, long ago, walked about the castle courts in suits of sheet iron, and I think it is a pity that one of their descendants, who has as much brains and baronial pride as the best of them, should not set those around him a better example, so far at least as refers to church-going. He may think it a "slow thing" to sit two hours in a cold church in dull contiguity to the sarcophagus of his ancestors: but he must not forget that the hour is coming when his own lead coffin—scutcheoned and coronetted it is true, but still *his* coffin—shall be deposited by their side, and then comes the time (as his own vicar, the Rev. Seaton Kar, will

tell him) for reconciling the inequalities of this life. I know this is too public a place to read his Lordship a lecture, but I should like to dine with him some day alone, and when the servants had retired, and the shades of evening were thickening around his old grey towers, to reason with him (if I were worthy to do so) like St. Paul with Felix, of "righteousness, and temperance, and judgment to come," so as to be able at least to prevail upon him to go to Church more than once in the twenty-five years.

From the Lord, however, I must now return to the vicar of Berkeley. I said the service was admirably performed, and that a stranger, previously knowing nothing of the place, would say on a single visit to the Church, that it was amongst the most fortunate parishes in the kingdom. I wish I could conclude here; but I am sorry to say there are many complaints, and I am still more sorry to add there are some grounds for them. The Rev. Seaton Kar is what is emphatically called a *fox-hunting parson*. I am no Puritan to seek to class the manly and noble sports of the field amongst the sins of commission; but I think I may say, as a general principle, that a clergyman may be much better employed than in participating in them, especially when he has a populous and extensive parish, containing four thousand souls to attend to, which is the case with Mr. Kar, who does not even keep a curate to look after his pastoral care while he is riding after his Lordship's hounds twice or three times a-week in the season. If ever an old church-going gossip had such a phenomenon as a sporting reader, he will be able to corroborate what I say—he will doubtless be in a position to tell you that the Vicar of Berkeley is one of the most zealous and forward members of that hunt. He does not, it is true, "sport the pink" and blue collar; but I wish he did, as this would be infinitely more decent than mounting the silver fox on his black coat, which is his usual practice. If a clergyman will hunt, let him hide himself as soon as possible in the general

hue and habit of those with whom he is surrounded, and not draw down upon his sacred profession the jeers of the field, by hunting in a kind of semi-clerico harlequinade. Fancy a number of men charging a fence, and, foremost amongst them, the Vicar of Berkeley, with his badged black coat and his silk stockings showing coyly, but with evident display, above the summit of his top-boots ; while his lordship, plodding along in the rear, bellows out, "*There goes the parson !*" What a picture of pastoral self-denial and care, especially if you consider the possibility of a funeral waiting for him at that moment, and it may be for an hour previously, in Berkeley churchyard.

As if hunting, however, did not encroach sufficiently on Mr. Kar's clerical duties, he is also a magistrate ; so that the little surplus of time left to his four-thousand parishioners may be better imagined than described. It is, therefore, hardly to be wondered at, "if such things be," that schism should flourish rather rankly in the neighbourhood. Mr. Kar does not want for talents or intelligence—he can plead no brutish insensibility to the awful responsibility of his situation. I, therefore, ask him seriously and in all friendly though solemn feeling, to re-consider his ordination vow. There are four-thousand immortal souls, he should recollect, committed to his charge.

In conclusion I would add a word or two. I have said that the parish of Berkeley contains four-thousand inhabitants, and I have also stated that the Vicar keeps no curate—am I mistaken when I say there is a law which empowers the Bishop of the Diocese to appoint a curate to a parish so circumstanced, when the incumbent neglects to do so ? No man is likely to know better whether this be the case or not than the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, for few are better fortified with or informed in ecclesiastical law ; yet I am satisfied his Lordship—if such a power were reposed in him—would not shrink from enforcing it in an instance

like Berkeley, where four-thousand parishioners are left to the sole "care" of a fox-hunting Vicar.

Some have accused me of injuring the church, by speaking plainly where there is occasion to do so. My answer is, in the words of the satirist—"*Stultorum incurata pudor malus ulcera celet.*"

The church is dedicated to the Virgin Mary.*

*. For a strange account of the mode by which Godwin effected the suppression of the conventual establishment which existed here in the reign of Edward the Confessor, see Atkins's "Gloucestershire."

Rev. Dr. Pusey.

I suppose most of my readers will do, as the Editor of the *Bristol Times* did when I presented this paper to him on Monday last, start at the ominous name at the head of it. But I have no fear of faggots—the day is gone by when people used to waste their fuel on one another, and Smithfield is now to my mind more suggestive of roast mutton than roast martyrs. I have, therefore, no apprehension for my personal safety or my subject, fortified as I feel I am in all the fervour of my Protestantism, by the new police and a whole pile of statute books.

Curious to hear the man who, noiseless himself, had yet made such a noise in the world, I went to Clifton Church on last Christmas-day, and had the mortification to find that, so far as Dr. Pusey was concerned, I had my walk for nothing. It was purposed, I was told, that he should preach, but some two or three red hot gentlemen having intimated their intention to walk out of the church with marked and significant stampings the moment he mounted the pulpit, the Professor consented, for the sake of peace, to waive his permission. I was thus again, for the third or fourth time, deprived of an opportunity of seeing and hearing a man who has unwittingly given a name to one of the two great parties that hold divided and, as it were, defiant sway in the Anglican Church. The fact is, clergymen have begun to be so much frightened of late about the movements and “perversions” that are daily chronicled, that they are afraid to open their pulpits to any of the men who have been ostensibly identified, or proximately or remotely associated, with the events that

have taken place—they are afraid of their flocks, and afraid of that most terrible of all modern demonstrations, when a congregation rise *en masse* and walk down the aisles and out at the doors. It is, therefore, no longer the easy task it formerly was to hear one of the great Oxford dons, and especially the Hebrew Professor. It is like harbouring an attainted person, for any incumbent to permit one of the “suspected” to enter his church for the purpose of preaching; and it is only in some remote watering-place, where he is comparatively unknown, that you have a chance of hearing the Canon of Christ Church, or, as in the present case, at a parish like Horfield, where the incumbent has the daring to open his door to a man who wanders about like an ecclesiastical Cain, with the Vice-Chancellor’s mark on his forehead, and an Exeter Hall anathema on his head.

And a bold man must this Henry Richards, B.D., be, thought I, when the Sunday following I found the Hebrew Professor was decidedly and really to preach at the little parish church in question: it is very clear the Perpetual Curate of Horfield has not to pay his Christmas bills out of pew rents, and that a congregational service of plate is not amongst the windfalls of forty-seven, to which he looks forward with serene confidence, or he would have had a man of less alarming prestige to preach his afternoon sermon; for, even though Doctor Pusey were a dove, whom a hard-judging world had kept on ceaseless and harassing wing, prudence would seem to suggest to each incumbent, the propriety of not permitting him to alight or rest foot in his individual parish.

Nevertheless, the little church was filled—a flock of more than ordinary numbers having collected together to be devoured by the “ravening wolf from the banks of Isis,” as a Birmingham platform man called the Professor some time ago. The people were mostly parishioners, though there were some who, like myself, took a crisp cold walk from Bristol through curiosity, and

others, admirers of the Doctor who came from Clifton in flys, and followed his footsteps with all the affection and fidelity of devoted disciples for a world-driven but patiently enduring master. The heavy shadows of a winter evening were beginning to fill the church, and cast an additional gloom on the Christmas evergreens; and this, with the fact of our being near the close of another year, and the apparently proscribed character of the man who was about to preach, imparted something very sombre and peculiarly subdued to the scene.

That last solemn chapter of Revelations was being read when I entered—that chapter which partakes of a character at once awful and melancholy, from the warning and farewell which it seems to convey to the reader, who there takes leave of the sacred volume, and hears as it were the valedictory words of the Evangelist fall upon the ear, like the parting and sublime sentences of some sacred and holy visitor. The incumbent and curate were officiating: and in a pew under the pulpit, in a plain black gown, sat the man whose name is known throughout the kingdom—arraigned on the platforms of our great cities, and pronounced with something like a supernatural sense of dread by the smallest coteries of the remotest village—one of no high and haughty bearing, however, with authority in his eye, or commanding intellect enthroned on his brow; but drooping his head meekly on his breast, he seemed rather to shrink from than challenge observation. Of all the simple people that crowded that simple church not one looked more humble or more unconscious of self, or of the stealthy or fixed glances which were directed to him from time to time by the stray comers, some of whom, I have little doubt, expected to see the celebrated Pusey (an heresiarch in the eyes at least of half the Church), of some fearful outline, differing from other men in his form and visage. No horn or cloven hoof, however, protruded to reward their curiosity, and more than that, they looked in vain in his comparatively common-place and quiet face for

those traits which distinguish one man above another, and externally mark that mind which pervades a sphere wider than that occupied by ordinary capacities. A stranger entering the church, on being pointed out a plain and apparently poor spirited man, would hardly believe that was the person with whose name every one has been so familiar for the last ten years, for he would vainly look, not merely for the outward and visible signs of decision, penetration, and strength of will, but for any apparent evidence of the reasoning subtlety and profound learning, which were so eminently the instruments with which what are called the Oxford school worked.

Nevertheless, I looked upon him with interest and curiosity (not of an approver or admirer, for these are points upon which I do not profess or pretend to enter), and I felt my eyes ever and anon fixed on that quiet and contemplative face and figure in the pew beneath the pulpit; for there is interest—an interest for the observer, social or moral, in every man who has been distinguished by the world, or, as in this case, has involuntarily distinguished himself—who has been identified with or taken prime part in any marked occurrence, principle, or change, upon which loud bruited consequences have followed. First, too, in the movement that was made, Edward Bouverie Pusey is almost the only one of those in whose company he commenced that movement now remaining behind; like some lone column, the only one of a stately row which once adorned the portico of our great academy, but which in melancholy series, one by one, have sunk undermined, or fallen prostrate, he still stands, though alone.—There is a solemn but sad sense of solitude in the feeling with which you contemplate him; while at the same time there is in his very isolation something of insecurity, as though you feared the fate which levelled all the rest awaited him also, and you expected daily to hear that he too had disappeared. Yet, notwithstanding predictions and apprehensions, he still stands;

the slender shaft has not snapped under the weight of academic censure and public obloquy that has been heaped upon it, but—

“By the billow-beaten side
Of the foam-besilvered main,
Darkling and alone he stands.”

And if in some years more he still remain stationary and stable, still be found occupying his place within the pale of the Anglican Church, I shall regard him with as much triumph and satisfaction as I now watch him with anxiety; for if he abide with us, he will have established his character for fixed and founded principle, under an ordeal severe and trying. Those who call themselves his opponents in the Church taunt him with duplicity in remaining—they impatiently and petulantly demand the reason of his stay, and inquire why he tarries, after his old associates have passed the line: while his “old associates” themselves beckon to him with dim fingers from Rome to follow—voices long familiar to him and long loved, I have no doubt, with which he held deep and lofty converse in the shadowy cloisters of Oxford—voices which, even in their fall, must still have fond and affectionate associations for him,—these call to him, too, from their delusive retreats at Oscot “to come over,” nor loiter behind his personal and intellectual friends and literary colleagues. These are things and temptations to try a man’s principles and solidity: those who are in, wishing to thrust him out, impugning his sincerity and taxing his patience; and those who are out appealing to old feelings and old friendships to induce him to follow,—tests light, it is true, to fixed and rooted conviction, but full of peril to Edward Bouverie Pusey, if his principles be as infirm as by some they are represented to be.

I rail not at those who are gone. They who still estimate the blessings they enjoy in a pure Anglican Church, can best pity men whose greatest punishment will be found in the loss they have sustained; and this

was more than ever my feeling—a feeling rather of sorrow than of anger—when, some time ago, one eminent name after another fell from its lofty estate; and the Protestant public appalled heard crash after crash in high places, with somewhat the startled sensation of the pilgrim who,

“At dead of night, ’mid his oraison, hears
Aghast the voice of time disparting towers,
Tumbling all precipitate down.”

Even brawlers held their breath for a while, awed by a ruin greater than that which they apprehended in their greatest alarm.

Neither do I estimate so lightly, as some seem to do, the loss we have sustained in the decadence and fall of those men who have left us. I pretend to no learning myself, as the word learning in its large signification implies; but the little I have been able painfully and slowly to pick up, is sufficient to enable me to estimate learning in others, and undoubtedly vast was the learning of these “fallen intelligences.” No puny superficial readers were they; but back, back, back into centuries went their research, until I sometimes think in traversing, mining as it were, through medieval learning to remoter knowledge, their eyes and heads became so accustomed to the obscurity through which they toiled, that they grew gradually unaccustomed and indisposed to the light, and at length left it altogether for the gloom of Rome, and the congenial shadows of its rich but unreal ceremonial.

Yet how noble did this same “Oxford school”—whose porch is now empty, whose masters are dispersed or have deserted, and whose disciples have been nearly all carried off captive to Rome—once appear. In the heat and clamour of present controversy, and in the outcry naturally occasioned by recent and calamitous events, we have lost sight of the active origin of this school, and of the circumstances under which its early publications issued to the world. An adverse government, the declared and avowed enemies of the Church

Establishment, had been long in power, and a still more dreary prospect was before us in the apparent probability of the term of their sway being remote. Peril from without—real peril menaced the existence of the Church, while within the feelings of its members and ministers had sunk low, and both seemed to have lost sight of those high principles, the possession of which by its children held out the best hope of resistance, and safety in that resistance. It was then, when clouds were collecting into masses above our heads, and the Church's well-wishers generally felt an instinctive dread of coming trial and attack—an uneasy apprehension of impending danger, without knowing how it was to be averted—that this same "Oxford school" put forth its unpretending but still earnest and able pamphlets, which by leading us to a higher standard of principle placed us on a 'vantage ground, from which we were enabled to appal an aggression which otherwise we might not have been able to repel. These little modest brochures, which are described as being issued upon whitey-brown paper at first, were prompt and potent in their work—quietly they came from that knot of contemplative and reading men who, unseen amid the scholastic retirement of their colleges, penned them; but not quiet or unseen was their effect on the public mind—they were mighty for a time in operation: and well had it been if with the occasion for them they ceased, and their authors, unblinded by the pride of controversy, had not gone on, until from seeking to bewilder others they were bewildered themselves. Many of the hands that penned these early productions now wear the manacles of Rome: still the effect of these early productions in recalling us from a downward tendency to dissent remains, and though those from whom they emanated have fallen, the good which they did has not been interred with them in their "living tomb." We acknowledge the might and mind of their first efforts, though we deplore the subsequent error and fall of the men from whom they proceeded, and

lose patience with the weakness, folly, and frippery of their puny imitators.

But here I have been all this time treading upon ticklish ground—rushing, with all the rashness imaginable, into controversy, while the Editor's pen is doubtless poised above my pages, and he hesitates whether he shall erase them or not. Had it fallen with obliterating certainty I should have forgiven him, for I dare say such opinions as I possess will not suit those who are partisans upon either side. I do not, like the Pharisee of old, thank God that I am not as other men are; but I have endeavoured to keep my old head as cool and clear, and my heart as free from hostility as practicable, during the fierce contests and polemic struggles through which we have passed, and are passing, and I endeavour to estimate persons and principles more from my own observation, poor and imperfect as it is, than from the representations of others. Thus it was that I was enabled, without prejudice or horror at the name of Pusey, to sit down and judge for myself, while I watched, with the interest of an observer merely, the manner, person, and preaching of a remarkable man.

While the last Psalm was being sung, the Professor left his pew (no officious sexton leading the way) and ascended to the pulpit, on the floor of which he knelt down in private prayer, his upraised hands and grizzled thin hair being the only parts visible, until the singing had concluded, when he rose and prayed in a contrite and almost thrilling tone. Yet there was nothing affected in all this; on the contrary, whatever Doctor Pusey's opinions or doctrines may be, so far as man can judge of man, you would have said his character was that of pious humility and self-abasement.

His text was taken from part of the 6th verse of the 21st chapter of Revelations. "And he said unto me it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Never before did I hear so beautifully *evangelical* a sermon as this from the man who has

given a name to a party which is supposed to represent a different principle in the church. It had but one fault, it was fifteen minutes too long. Nevertheless it was listened to throughout, by that little crowded church-full, with fixed and rapt attention, though it was neither declamatory, noisy, nor eccentric; but plaintive, solemn, and subdued, breathing all through, I may say, a beauty of holiness and a Christian spirit so broad and Catholic, so deep and devotional, that while the most jealous Protestant could find nothing in it he might not approve, the most bigoted Roman Catholic could not enter an exception to a single expression that it contained. I never recollect so feelingly apposite a sermon for the close of the year—the very last week of which was then lapsing from beneath our feet. We seemed, as it were, to look back with him from an eminence in serious review upon the transactions of the year, ere it had yet passed from our sight, while ever and anon, in touching recurrence and solemn fall, came the words "*It is done*," which were every time, with some beautiful feature of novelty, illustrated and enlarged upon. He seemed, however, to love to dwell upon the sad and melancholy; and his voice, though clear and distinct, had something mournful, and at times almost wailing, about it. The subject and the season, indeed, would seem to invite such a feeling, and at moments you could almost fancy you were hearing an office for the departing year, at the close of which, as if in mournful cadence, came the word (for in the language in which it is written it is but one word) "*It is done*." There he stood a plain, and, to all appearances, an humble and lowly man, preaching to a simple people, and speaking with the melancholy weakness as of one stricken and tried, yet uncomplaining. The very gloom of the little church (for the four candles by which he had to read his sermon, and which were hardly sufficient to cast a faint reflection on the fixed countenances of the attentive listeners, were all the light which parochial economy could afford) seemed in

keeping: yet this plain and apparently unpretending man, of mild manners and of middle years and stature, who now preached a sermon more perfectly free from controversy than ever I before heard, had himself been foremost in the greatest controversy of the age, so as to attract the eyes of the kingdom to his collegiate retirement.

"Who be he that preached," said one young rustic maiden to another as we left the church: "a monstrous nice man, but dreadful long."

"Don't you know," replied the other; "it is that Mr. Pewdsey, who is such a friend to the Pope: but come along, or we'll be late for tea," and away they trotted.

Now, whether Doctor Pusey be a friend to the Pope or not, the reader has his portrait as faithfully and impartially as I can paint it. An old friend of mine, when she heard I was going to give a paper on the Oxford Professor, shook her head and looked as ominous as though I had undertaken to give a likeness of another person, whose name is excluded from polite circles. "You'll get into a scrape, as sure as day," said she. "And if I do, as sure as night I'll get out of it," was my reply. "I can lose nothing by public indignation but the plum pudding that you have been kind enough to send me almost every week; and without comparing myself to the least of the early Confessors, I can place my hand on my heart and say that I can even sacrifice plum pudding to principle."

A DAY OF "GREAT DOINGS" IN BRISTOL.

I did not go from home last Sunday, as the reader may suppose, who recollects how it rained. And, indeed, if it were fair, I question if I should have taken to the country while Bristol was so full of "Great Guns." There was Joseph Wolff preaching for the school-children at St. Philip's, and Hugh McNeile for the Evangelical Curates at St. Matthew's, and the Rev. J. M. Rodwell for the Orthodox Curates at St. Nicholas, and a most brisk spiritual competition for people's money going on at all sides. It was what honest old Thorp, the Dissenting minister, used to call "an active Sabbath, Sir, a most bustling day of rest, a day when people get a gadding from their own places of worship, their own preachers, and running after *strange Gods*." There were flys and carriages rattling by you, and carrying people away from their parishes; and pattens clattering, and umbrellas dripping. There was even my landlady hurrying breakfast that she might be off in time for Christ Church, Clifton, to hear the demigod of the Liverpudlians; and my spinster neighbour, Miss —, next door, making as much clatter, as gathering up her clothes she trotted off iron-shod to St. Nicholas, as though she were a lineal descendant of Tubal-Cain. As I noticed the disturbing effect of those "Great Guns" on the domestic and parochial quiet of the city, I could not help saying with the Jews of Thessalonica, "Those that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." The Liverpudlian orator carried off the palm of attraction: Christ Church was a concrete mass of human beings in the morning, and St. Matthew's was positively heaped up in the

evening, there being two policemen to keep order amongst the Christian world at the door. I did not hear the Rev. Hugh in the morning, but in the evening at St. Matthew's he had no pity on Popery, Puseyism, or his hearers, for he gave all three the benefit of an hour and twenty-five minutes at one sitting and sermon. Now, I am as mortal a foe to Popery as the Rev. Hugh McNeile, or, as Newman the Apostate called him, *Hew!* McNeile,* but "had all their hairs been lives (as Othello says) my strong revenge" hath not "stomach" for an hour and twenty-five minutes.

Hugh McNeile.

Hugh McNeile is a fine looking man of commanding figure, sonorous voice, of ostentatious and elegant action, and all the confidence of a public pet; but I did not, and do not, think him a man of depth or profundity of learning: for instance, take away his fine figure, his fine voice, and showy elocution, and there is nothing in what he says to bear the test of a calm, contemplative student's reading in the closet. I liked him better on the platform at the Victoria Rooms, on Tuesday. Then I never saw a man so much at home or at his ease: more a cosmopolite than Francis Close, he yet bears a resemblance to the Vicar of Cheltenham—he is of that school. You see at once the self-possession of the man who has declaimed in every public room in England, from Exeter Hall downwards. He is a most flexible, versatile rhetorician: at one moment on Tuesday he was defying Doctor Ullathorne and all Prior-park to polemic combat in that room—calling on Popery to send out one of her champions—to "give him a man that he might fight withal;" at

* Our venerable correspondent is wrong; it was the Rev. Hugh Stowell to whom Mr. Newman applied this pun.—*Ed. Bristol Times.*

another and the next moment he was talking to the ladies, about how they were to act as parochial visitors, in as colloquial a way as if he were seated with them at a mahogany table, surrounded by their work boxes, scissors, and spools of cotton. And, by the way, there was something very wholesomely practical in his notions on this point: he told them they must remember that poor people required something more than spiritual consolation; and when they went about to their hovels or houses, it was expedient that they carried some creature comforts with them also—some food for the hungry—for the sick, some physic or delicacy—some wine for the weak, or some soup that they might warm up on going into a house where there was need of it. This is wise: you may depend upon it many a fair young visitor would be more welcome if, on entering a poor family, the end of a mutton bone and the neck of a wine bottle, as well as some drab-covered paper tracts, were seen sticking out of her reticule, or if her black silken bag was known to be plethoric with bread and cheese. Soup is useful but not portable, but physic I think is rather a delicate and dangerous practice for young ladies. Let them stick to the food: they can't go wrong much in administering that, though they may medicine. The Rev. Hugh McNeile, in fact, is one of a large class of clever preachers and evangelical platform men, who now carry all the out-door world before them in England; but the strange eastern traveller whom I heard in the morning at St. Philip's was quite another being, as dissimilar to McNeile as Lahore is to Liverpool.

Dr. Wolff.

Dr. Wolff himself tells us, somewhere in one of his narratives, that when he was admitted to the presence of the King of Bokhara (who, according to his account,

was a decidedly ugly monarch), the latter leant his chin on his hand, and looking at him, said—"Thou man—thou eccentric man—thou star with a tail—thou man, neither like a Jew, nor an Englishman, nor a German, nor like a Russian—thou art *Joseph Wolff*!" His Bokhara majesty, though not abounding in beauty, seems not to have lacked discrimination; for he really hit off the character of the stranger with wonderful precision. "Thou art like *Joseph Wolff*," and nobody else I ever beheld—thou art a clergyman unique, and a creature *sui generis*. One had only to see him sitting, in his black gown between the churchwardens, in the red-cushioned seat at St. Philip's on Sunday, to see that he was not like any one else in the world: he thrust his face into his prayer-book, then threw himself back, then looked at his watch, and rubbed his forehead and fidgetted himself about, much to the amazement of the parish authorities and my old friend Dan Baynton, who sat close by; in fact, he seemed impatient to have the prayers over, that he might go up into the pulpit and pour forth his heterogeneous mass of miscellaneous learning—multitudinous language, anecdote, personal adventure, and rich orientalisms—which he curiously enough called a sermon, though it had neither order, method, sequence, argument, or arrangement, or any quality which entitled it to the term. Yet who in that church, or any other, ever heard a discourse which they listened to with such rivetted interest, or from which (odd as the word may seem in connection with a sacred subject,) they derived such *amusement*? I don't know how to describe him—to describe him on paper is impossible. I might give you his matter (and even that variegated and desultory as it was, it would have been difficult to do justice to); but his manner is out of the question, unless orally and personally, and that by a first-rate actor. How he tossed up his hands, in his excitement, as he told over again his "moving accidents by flood and field"—how he wrought himself up into such a phrenzy of zealous fervour, until he shouted out

as if bellowing to a camel-driver in the desert, making the old church echo again, as if it were itself startled with sounds so strange within its sacred precincts,—all this must be done by actual description. You have seen the picture of John Knox preaching before Mary Queen of Scots, and leaning forward in fierce zeal with outstretched arms over the pulpit: a dozen times did he remind me of this painting, as, holding the Bible between his fingers in one hand he struck it with the other, and shouted with a voice, that made the nervous start—“*This is the Book of Truth!*” Then he would as suddenly calm down, placing his elbows on the cushion and his chin on his hands, and commence, in a colloquial way, some story of his travels. He was everything by fits, and nothing long: he seemed to be a compound of innumerable characters—a wonder-relating Hadji, an Eastern story-teller, a ranting preacher, a public lecturer. You could hardly say whether the love of travel or of truth more predominated in his nature; for his discourse was more a recital of his adventures than a theological disquisition: every reference to Scripture was illustrated by some incident, beginning, “When I was in Bokhara,” or “On my first visit to Mesopotamia,” or “I never understood this passage until, in '38, I happened to be in Abyssinia”—travelling all the time in his descriptions, not by common-place miles, but by degrees of latitude and longitude; referring to the most remote and outlandish places, as if the farthest of them were only an eighteen-penny fly fare from St. Philip's Church. He talked of Trebisonde, Teheran, and Trabees, as if they were “over the way,” and Trichonopoly as if it were next door; as for Poonah, Cabool, and Cashmere, they might have been Lambeth, Camdentown, and Islington, for all the difficulty he made about them. Then the vast circle and variety of his acquaintances!—He had friends from the promontory of Camaria to the Punjaub. The Dervish of Meshet was his most particular friend; Parsees without number he knew; he stroked beards

with the Vizier of Herat; and from the off-hand way in which he spoke of conversations with Runjēt Singh, you would have thought he and the Lion of Lahore were foster brothers—from clouds of Fakirs he received cross questions and compliments—Greek Patriarchs, Nestorian Christians, he was on the most intimate footing with—he took tea on the tops of their houses with the people of Aleppo—he smoked with the merchants of Damascus on the banks of the Barrada, and seemed as much at home at Tadmor in the Desert, as in the parish of Isle Brewers and Langport, in the County of Somerset. And you believed it was all true—you knew it was not mere travellers' stories you were listening to—you knew that strange, singular-looking, little grey-headed man, who was there preaching for the poor children of St. Philip's, had been through all that he told you—that under the fanciful title of "the great Dervish of England and all Europe," dressed in his gown and Doctor's hood, and a Bible in his hand, he had fought and toiled through all the perils of the way from England to Bokhara, as great an enthusiast as Peter the Hermit, and a greater traveller. Thrown amongst the wildest tribes, mixing with the most singular people, and his zeal and erratic restless character supporting him in all, he seems, as it were, a missionary Knight Errant in search of adventure. And then fancy the same man after all this sitting down to a little country parish in Somersetshire, where, by the way, his mode of proceeding is characterised by the same eccentricity which he ever displays. I am told he will work himself up to such a pitch that he will burst out into a Hebrew song in the midst of his sermon, and give vent to his zeal in other extacies equally singular. He ought never have sat down to attempt the duty of a rural parish—he is no more fit for its patient, painstaking drudgery, than the zebra or wild ass of the desert is fit to be made use of in the farm. You can't chain down that erratic being—all life and fire and excitement and wildness—to a country

parsonage.. He must be either roving or telling of his roving. You see yourself how little of his company the poor people of Isle Brewers must have, while he is lecturing or preaching or wandering about with his curious adventures from pulpit to platform; nor can his parishioners to-day be quite sure that to-morrow he may not be off to Crim Tartary or Cochin China; especially if he hear that any unfortunate Englishman has lost his way or his head there.

He took his text from the 13th verse of the 51st Psalm nominally, but he had all the Bible for his theme. He might have taken it from the whole book of Tophat for any tie it was to him: his irregular excursive fancy flitted about from Genesis to Revelations, and he got so full of the King of Bokhara, Runjeet Singh, and Captain Conolly, that you saw it was not until it was time for him to conclude that the man thought of what he was placed in that pulpit to preach for, or even dreamt of the schools of St. Philip and Jacob: his imagination, and perhaps his heart, was all the time in Trichonopoly, Trebizond, or Meshet. He began at once with his travels, and told us he should adopt a course which was followed in the Christian Churches of the East, and which he saw prevail when he was in the mountains of Kurdistan and in Mesopotamia, namely, to take one part but talk about all parts of the chapter, in a kind of running exposition. However, the chapter, or even the whole Bible, was not enough to restrain the discursive fancy of this Bedouin Arab of the pulpit: he gave us some of the Italian Poet Dante's *Divina Commedia*—quoted Schlegl, the great modern German philosopher, critic, and historian—had something to say about the painter Correggio, St. Augustine, Martin Luther, and the Arabian Nights Tales. His language was a rich Mosaic, inlaid with Eastern tongues, Hebrew, Arabic, Ethiopic, Sanscrit, now and again giving us the English, but not unfrequently complimenting our learning by passing over a knotty bit of Ethiopic or Coptic without translating it.

Nor was his accent less singular than his matter. I have somewhere seen it said (whether it be true in fact I can't say) that if you mixed up all the colours in the world, they'd produce white: so I think if you mix up all the accents in the world, you get Irish. Dr. Wolff, strange as it may appear, has a *brogue*: this struck me the moment he commenced reading the Bidding Prayer, or rather spelling through it, for it was more like that. Then, too, it was that for a moment he reminded me very much of old Dr. Brydges, who was rather an odd man in his way, and who used to preach at Redcliff, and who always was looking at his watch, or at the dilapidations of his gloves, while praying for the king and corporation. As I have already said, I never was more interested, or rather *entertained* (that is the proper word), by any man from the pulpit before, though I knew my roast duck was being carbonated at the time. Never returned Palmer of old, with his scallop shell and staff from Holy Land, more full of tales, of adventure, of escape, of accident, or incident—he was the Prince of story tellers: you travelled with him through the desert and jungle, and you never felt the half hours pass the while: he is a pulpit Hadji,* and you could not help listening to him while he went, like Othello—

“ Through all his travels' history,
While of Antres vast, and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills, whose heads touch heaven,
It was his hint to speak.”

* The term Hadji will be best understood by a quotation from Volney's Travels, vol. 2, chap. xxx.:—“ In general the pilgrims arrive safe; in which case their profits are very considerable. At all events they are recompensed in the veneration attached to the title of *Hadji* (Pilgrim); and by the pleasure of boasting to their countrymen of the wonders of the Casba and Mount Ararat; of magnifying the prodigious crowds of pilgrims, and the number of victims, on the day of the Bairam; and recounting the dangers and fatigues they had undergone, the extraordinary figure of the Bedouins, the Desert without water, and the tomb of the prophet at Medina, which, however, is neither suspended by a lead-stone, nor the principal object of their pilgrimage. These wonderful tales produce their usual effect, that is, they excite the admiration and enthusiasm of the audience, though, from the confessions of sincere pilgrims, nothing can be more wretched than this journey. Ac-

Nor was it in adventure and anecdote that he was only attractive ; at times he brought his knowledge of Eastern languages and literature to bear in fanciful and beautiful illustration of the figures and phrases of the Bible : for instance, when enlarging on the soothing and salutary effects of prayer, and the perfect yielding up of the heart to God which it implied, he said, " The Hebrew word for prayer is (as well as I could collect) *lal-lah*, which signifies the stammerings of a child, or childish supplication, the penitent confessing himself to his Heavenly Father in the imperfect and broken, faltering accents of a child. Our beautiful Liturgy, taken from the Bible, is full of these true child-like stammerings—"Al-migh-ty and most mer-ci-ful Fa-ther, we have er-red and stray-ed from thy ways"—these are the child's stammerings. The Arabic word is *Soolah*, the outpourings of a burning heart—see that—Isn't it beautiful ?"

So much in praise of Dr. Wolff, or rather of his *entertaining* manner as a preacher ; half-a-dozen such men as he, however, would spoil the pulpit of Great Britain. Once give the people the habit of listening to all these eventful stories—those varied and strange miscellanies—narratives of travels, called sermons, because they have a text prefixed—and you will not get congregations again to listen to a sound or orderly discourse : give them rich cakes and confections full of the citron and fruits of the East, and you will find they soon lose the appetite for plain wholesome food. I confess, in my case he spoiled me for a very excellent sermon which I heard in the afternoon ; and even Hugh McNeil, though he thundered away at Popery and Dr. Pusey in the evening, was thin and insipid after the Bokhara pilgrim with his rich orientalisms, his wild

cordingly, this transient admiration has not prevented a proverb, which does little honour to these pious travellers. *Distrust thy neighbour, says the Arab, if he has made a Hadji ; but, if he has made two, make haste to leave thy house.*" Of course, I don't apply the latter part of the extract to Dr. Wolff.

and picturesque manner, his enthusiasm, and spiritual *abandon* (to use a French term.) It is very well to listen to *one* Joseph Wolff (and I could listen to him for two hours without tiring); but I should be sorry to see half-a-dozen Joseph Wolffs; for it is only his singularity and genius, and known history, that save his pulpit exhibitions from a tendency to mountebankism. Another thing: with such men as preachers, there would be a danger of people going to church to be entertained, and not edified.

After service I went into the vestry to see him, as you would a living curiosity; and even there he did not appear to have lost a particle of his eccentricity. He was walking about, minding no one, though the room was half full of parish and other authorities. He had a stick in his hand, with which, every time he came to either side, he energetically punched the wall, tilting at some point or other on the panels, all the while thinking, perhaps, of the ruins of Balbec or his most particular friends, the Dervish of Meshet and the Caliph of Bagdad. He was awakened from his reverie and pastime of wall-punching to be introduced to one of the municipal representatives of the ward—"Doctor Wolff, allow me to introduce Mr. ———." The Doctor looked up at the party presented, as if for one moment he did not know whether the latter were the Lion of Lahore, the Khan of Tartary, or the Nabob of Arcot, or whether he should give a salaam or salute—whether he should stroke his beard, or place the soles of his feet on the summit of his shoulders, and say "Peace to the King." However, he seemed at length to understand, that it was a municipal corporator and not an Eastern pundit, he was about to accost: he bowed, and then immediately inquired of the person introduced, "*Have you a mayor here?*" Well, well, Joseph Wolff, thought I, truly enough did his Pokhara Majesty call thee, "Thou man—thou eccentric man—thou star with a tail." Who'd ever think of your asking such a question as "Is there a mayor?" when you have been praying

for five minutes for His Worship not an hour ago, and been looking down on His Worship all the time of your sermon. I was shocked to think the scarlet robe and gold chain made so little impression on Joseph's imagination, or that the tramping of his worship's grey horses, the sheen of His Worship's grand liveries, the parade of leading up His Worship into a high seat amid a bevy of brother corporators, should never have caught the roving eye of the little eccentric Eastern pilgrim; but the fact is, he has been so used to Asiatic potentates, that nothing short of a maharajah would attract his attention: even John Kerle Haberfield was lost upon him.

Henry of Exeter.

THERE is no man whom, for the last few years, I have been so eager to see as Henry of Exeter. More than any other living prelate he met the picture which my imagination had drawn of the high and haughty churchman of past times. Had he lived in the eleventh century he would have been a Hildebrand; or moved and had his being at the time of Henry the Second, have torn the Constitutions of Clarendon, or come down to us, like Thomas à Becket, canonized for sublime contumacy to his king. When I read the passage in Mosheim, which describes the character of Gregory VII., the Bishop of Exeter stood before me: "Sagacious, crafty, and intrepid, nothing could escape his penetration, defeat his stratagems, or daunt his courage; haughty and arrogant beyond measure; obstinate, impetuous, and intractable, he looked up to the summit, * * and laboured up the steep ascent with uninterrupted ardour and invincible perseverance." I fancied, too, that the prelate might sit for the portrait of the pontiff, "with a crook in one hand," as Voltaire tells us the Neapolitan artist drew him, "and a whip in the other; trampling sceptres under his feet, with St. Peter's net and fishes on either side of him."

Nor was it to be wondered at, if my imagination took a romantic or dramatic turn, from all I had heard and read of "mitered Exeter"—from all friends or foes had advanced for and against him. In his origin there was something to set him apart from the prelates that had risen by common-place progress; who had found their way to episcopacy by the smooth and placid road

of a prudent piety and gradual promotion, or plodded to the same point across the ploughed and heavy field of academic learning, by the sheer strength of a ponderous endurance. The son of a Gloucester innkeeper, he had attained to the prelatial bench and stood prominent there, not only applying his powerful and impetuous eloquence to ecclesiastical matters, but mingling in political conflict for the high concerns of the kingdom, when he seldom wasted his strength upon smaller adversaries, but, singling out some one of the foremost of the lay-lords, measured minds with him alone. Who does not recollect his early hand-to-hand combats in the Upper House with Brougham, when, during some of the wild debates which distinguished the long and troubled administration of the Whigs, the ex-Chancellor and the Bishop, as if by some fierce instinct of superior animals and a consciousness of mutual strength, sought out, and fixed, and fastened upon each other, and stood—

“Like Titans, face to face.”

It was no child's play, when vigour and venom on one hand were encountered by a nature more stern and an intellect hardly inferior on the other. Nor will it, I am sure, be necessary to remind the reader of the fearful force with which the Western Bishop descended on the soft and courtly Melbourne, when the latter, either in folly or forgetfulness, introduced the founder of the Socialists to the presence of his sovereign. Hour after hour did the mitred orator pour forth his terrible exposure of the tenets of the man who had been so admitted, until, having wrought up the House to the “highest pitch of interest and horror,” he shortly turned round, and fixing his grey eye on the offending First Minister, told him he incurred and merited impeachment! It was during that debate, I think, that a person who was in the House assured me he observed an incident as characteristic of the baughty Churchman as even his oratory. The Bishop had stepped forward to the table to make, apparently, some alteration in the terms of the

paper or motion which he held in his hand, when the Duke of Wellington, stooping down, seemed to suggest something in his ear; upon which the Bishop, without even looking round, impatiently and with a show of irritation waved back his hand, as though he had said, "Do—do, pray, leave me alone!" The hero of a hundred fights retired meekly to his seat—the warrior of strong purpose unconsciously giving way to the hot and impetuous priest, the mitred son of mine host of the Bell!

Such was, or I fancied was, the man whom I had never heard or seen until last Sunday, having almost for this purpose alone made a pilgrimage to Torquay, where I was told he either preached or took part in the service at St. John's Chapel in the morning. I am not a topographer; it is, therefore, no business of mine to give an account of a well known watering-place, which almost every body has seen. It is a good locality, I believe, for fish and invalids; and the Bishop seems to be fond of it, for he has built a marine pavilion about a mile from the town, close to the sea, with fountains and fruit trees and Italian terraces, that would not at all tempt you to cry, "*Nolo Episcopari*," if such things made part of the apostolic succession.

Torquay, like every other watering-place, has two parties in the Church, and two churches for these parties; by a happy fitness of situation, too, the high is on the hill and the low in the hollow. As Mr. Fayne's was not the one for me to look for "mitred Exeter" in, I followed the wheel chairs up the ascent, to that which calls the Rev. Park Smith incumbent. I was yet two hundred yards from the church when some one near me said, "Here is the Bishop;" and here he was, in a neat one-horse Brougham, with his two daughters, presenting by his thin white hair, his solid stern forehead, his grey eye and sallow worn countenance, a marked contrast to the bright colours of the ladies' dresses, and the fresh complexions of those who wore them. A passing glance was all I got of him as he leant back moodily or thought-

fully in the corner of his carriage ; but that was enough to show me he was no common man—the man who, when denouncing an offending minister in Parliament, or crushing a contumacious clergyman in the provinces, was equally following the impulse of a proud and imperious nature.

St. John's, Torquay, is the same church of which there was some mention a short time ago in the newspapers, as having provoked the wrath of the Bishop by being decorated up with wreaths of flowers round the altar, when his lordship, it was alleged, removed the floral ornaments—"tore them down," I think, was the phrase—with his own hands. For the truth of the report I do not answer ; there may have been some slight foundation for it, but nothing more. However, be this as it may, St. John's, in the manner and mode of proceeding with the service, is manifestly the opposite to low. Three clergymen and the Bishop took part in the prayers, and seemed like a little regiment of fine linen and lawn as they assumed their places within the altar rails, his lordship occupying the sedilia on the north side, and the three others sitting in row on the south. The church, which is a very poor plain Grecian structure, though well attended, was not full. Indeed there was little or nothing of the display or circumstance of architecture, &c., to "set off" the part which the Bishop took in the service ; yet I think the surrounding simplicity enabled one to observe his character and manner with more attention and interest, than if one were to see him amid all the pomp of his own cathedral, moving in procession between the Purbeck marble columns of the nave, or sitting under the towering crocketed canopy of his throne in the choir. The "mitred lord"—the "iron bishop," as some called him—taking part in the prayers of a little country church, had something more of sublimity for me, than if preceded by a file of mace-bearers, and followed by a retinue of robed clergy.

Selden says,—“For a Bishop to preach 'tis to do

olks' work, as if the steward of the house should be the porter's or the cook's place: 'tis his business that they, and all others about the house, perform duties." For the most part there may be policy and wisdom in this saying, but I should not like to see him turn his back altogether on the pulpit when he is a prelate; for we suppose he attains to that office for some eminent talent or acquirement, and it is a pity should be lost to the public on account of episcopacy. And so thinks Henry of Exeter, for he has been almost every Sunday morning, that he is attending to Parliament, riding in from Bishopsgate with a little black-covered sermon in a side pocket for the benefit of the congregation of St. John's. Fortunately for me, however, he did preach this morning, there being no sermon, as it was Sacrament Sunday—an economy of labour which, considering how many hands they had to make it light, I think they should not have indulged in. Still I heard him read, and I am sure that if that was not more characteristic of the Bishop than even his manner in the pulpit—of which I can form a fair estimate from his reading—might have

The prayers, lessons, and litany, were taken by the clerk of the curates, a Mr. Hutchins, I think; and when he came to the communion, the Bishop advanced from the sedilia, emerging from beneath the shadow of a great pillar, which, up to that time had hid him from my view, and, kneeling down, prayed in a low voice, raising his hand, which was stretched out on the altar, earnestly from time to time during his devotions. At the few opening words of the Lord's Prayer, with which the Communion commences, I could hardly hear him, but his voice, which is not that of a person in perfect health, becoming more earnest, grew, as he proceeded, distinctly audible, though still far from strong. However, I should say, he was more likely to be heard than many of your stentorian "popular" young men; and there is that about his solemn and impressive manner, his great apparent devotional earnestness, his age,

his appearance, his pale thin face, with the unmistakable stamp of authority and intellect upon it, to fix attention and to rivet you to the reader if not to the prayer. At the rehearsal of the Commandments he advanced to the steps of the altar, and facing the congregation, read, while the three clergymen knelt towards the East. His delivery of the Decalogue was beautifully judicious : without any appearance of acting, no acting could yet be employed to produce more effect : conscious of his want of strength, there was an earnest and emphatic effort to make up for his physical debility, as was evinced by the impressive shake of the head and the upraised hand at the close of almost every period. Between every commandment, and while the *Kyrie Elison* was being chaunted, he dropped his hands, still holding the open book, and raising his eyes and moving his lips as if he joined mentally in the petitions of the people, presented in his whole appearance such a picture of devotion and determination that my old ideal of Thomas à Becket again rose to my mind, while I wondered if he had ever heard what had been insisted on to me, that this deep devotional manner was not altogether unpremeditated. Nor was the Martyr of Canterbury the only person of whom his Lordship reminded me. He is evidently an invalid ; and I think there is nothing heightens the interest of intellect so much as ill health, which throws a pallor over, without weakening the power of, the face and forehead : and when the Bishop, as he sometimes did, dropped his head, or more properly his chin, on his breast in the pauses of the the service, as if exhausted by the exertion with which he endeavoured to overcome his weakness, he did (you will doubtless smile at the comparison) remind me of a similar action of Macready in the part of Richelieu, when the worn frame of the Cardinal seems almost overborne after some effort to which he is corporeally unequal.

As if it had been really so ordered for the sake of contrast, as soon as the Bishop had concluded the

prayer for the Queen, the youngest of the three clergymen and of the two curates came forward and read the collect. His tame but somewhat glib way of reading, and his youthful look, coming immediately after the last words of the Bishop, and while their absorbing effect was still on my mind, formed as great a dissimilarity as could possibly be conceived between the youthful deacon and the stern prelate.

The Bishop read the offertory while the churchwardens went round and collected. Leaning one hand on the altar, and looking out on the people, he seemed to follow the collectors in their progress with his eye, and slowly repeating the sentences with a long pause between each, to apply his exhortation to that part of the congregation from whom the alms were being then obtained. The offerings were delivered by the churchwardens to the clergymen, and by them emptied (with a bow) on the alms dish, which was placed by the Bishop, with another obeisance, on the altar. The clergymen then passed over to the piscina, from which they took each in succession a silver salver, on which they laid their offerings, and presented them on the altar; the churchwardens kneeling all the while by the rails.

When the morning service was concluded, the Bishop walked back to his seat or sedilia, and leaning his head on his hand seemed absorbed in devotion, or exhausted by the duty (for I looked back more than once), until I left the church.

I regretted very much that he did not preach; but I was told by those who have repeatedly heard him, that his style is quiet though impressive, and his discourse plain but full of matter: in fact, that Henry of Exeter, in the pulpit, shows none of that impetuous and imperious bearing—that vehemence and vigour—by which he has filled the country with the fame of his character, and distinguished himself from prelates of less daring intellect, but perhaps more discretion. He preached in St. John's, on the day of the General Fast,

a sermon which my informant assured me was listened to with hushed attention. The sermon was published, so the reader who has never heard his Lordship, may judge from an extract or two of his matter; and coupling this with the imperfect description I have given of his manner, form some idea of his preaching altogether.

The opening part of the discourse, which is taken from 2nd Samuel xxiv., 14, 15, is a plain exposition and application of the text, and it is only perhaps in the following passage or two that he departs from a severe but impressive simplicity. Alluding to the calamity which called for the day of humiliation, he said—

“In truth, there is something wonderfully striking and impressive in the time, and in the manner, of the present visitation. At no period of our national history, did our wealth, our power, our greatness, seem to be placed on so firm, and, to human observation, so unassailable a foundation. Abroad, war unsought and unprovoked, nay (with moderation, which we rejoice to remember), avoided, while, to avoid it was possible—war crowning our arms with victory, had forced upon us, almost against our will, new accessions of territory, enlarging at once and consolidating our empire in the East. At home, the peaceful conquests of science were yet more signal. Discoveries were made, giving to us what was almost equivalent to new powers of nature. Time and space ceased to impede the operations of our commerce—or to oppose barriers to the intercourse with regions the most remote—art was every day achieving fresh wonders. Expectation rioted in visions the most extravagant—for nothing seemed unattainable to British enterprise—no limit could be assigned to the swelling sphere, on which we proudly moved. It was *then*—in that our palmiest state—at the very epoch of our highest glory—that the decree went forth. Without warning—without notice—without any apparent change in the smiling aspect of all around us—no storm—no tempest—no parching drought—no immoderate rains—in a season of unusual serenity and promise—some tiny minister of omnipotence—an insect, or a moth—(I know not that the exact nature of the destroyer has been detected by the most curious eye)—sufficed to mock our pride, and humble our presumption—to fling confusion into our national councils—to strike our palaces with dismay—to carry famine and death over one of the fairest portions of the united realm.”

The eloquence and originality of the last passage I think I have not seen equalled in any of the sermons preached on that occasion. With his brief defence of the High Church doctrine of self-denial, and his denunciation of the charity ball, as being somewhat more

characteristic of the man than the other parts, I shall conclude :—

"There is something absolutely shocking in the dogged, wilful systematic resistance to everything like denial of self, which marks not merely the manners, but the declared principles of the age. They who attempt to rouse a better spirit, who invite to practices of self-denial, to the habitual sacrifice of our worldly substance to the service of God, are sometimes derided, not as mere visionaries, but as traitors to the cause of true religion—as hankering after the corruptions of Rome. Meanwhile, by a refinement in the tactics of modern selfishness—unknown in former generations—it has invaded the very precincts of the Christian life. The sacred names of piety and charity are polluted by association with the most frivolous and degrading concessions to this low habit. At this very time, on occasion of this tremendous visitation, one striking instance presents itself—which speaks most painfully of the miserable state of religious feeling amongst us. In the metropolis, and throughout a large portion of the land—(our own county, I grieve to hear, is not safe from the infection)—the awful calamity, which we this day profess to deplore as 'the heavy judgment which our sins and provocations have most justly deserved, and with which Almighty God is pleased to visit the iniquities of this land'—(I cite the very words which announce the Fast)—even this awful calamity is to be made the occasion of a special festivity. Half the aristocracy of Devon invites the young Christians of the higher orders among us, to dole out a miserable pittance of relief to their *famishing* and *dying* brethren in Ireland by the bribe of a public ball!—Nay—even this is not all, The night fixed for this mockery of the name of charity is the earliest that could be chosen after the solemnities of the holy week—the sacred duties of which are, it seems, to be mingled with preparations for the revel which is to follow!

Is it thus you obey the Apostle's precept to '*rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep*'? Are 'the things which were written aforetime written for our learning,' or are they no longer part of 'the doctrine which is according to godliness'? Among them is the oft-repeated saying of the inspired preacher, 'To everything there is a season—and a time for every purpose under heaven—a time to weep and a time to laugh—a time to mourn and a time to *dance*.' And this latter time, the fashionable commentators of the day assure us is when 'the Lord is pouring out His fierce anger' on one-half of our people: when they that feed delicately are desolate in the streets—when 'the tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst; the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh unto them'—aye, this is the time, this the *cause*, chosen by the daughters of Christian England, 'to rejoice in the dance:' 'and the harp, and the viol, the tabret and pipe are in their feasts'—must we not add?) for 'they regarded not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operations of His hands.'"

As the Bishop suffers acutely from cold feet, he has usually a footstool, heated by some artificial means, placed in the pulpit from which he preaches—a circumstance which has tempted his enemies (in allusion to

the circumstance of his being often embroiled with some contumacious clergyman or another) to make a poor and obvious pun that he is never so happy as when he is *in hot water*. And he certainly has not had a very smooth career of it in this way. With all the decision and determination of the ancient churchman, his "lines" and life have been cast in days unfriendly for the high and effectual exercise of episcopal command, when the authority of the Bishop is little but the shadow of a great name, which the contumacious clergyman oftener sets at defiance than fears. Henry of Exeter is the last man in the world to surrender that authority without a struggle for it; and neither his intrepidity nor his pride will allow him to give in to a rebellious member. He was said to have been a courtier in earlier days; but if he then bowed to a superior for any purpose, he did not learn to lower his mitred head to a refractory subordinate. Either may *break*, but it is not Exeter who will *bend*. Peace would be preferable to the frequent episcopal wars which his Lordship wages against contumacious clergy, if peace could be secured without compromise of right or dignity; but it is really a public service when we meet with a man with courage and perseverance, to break the stiff and obstinate necks of some clerical revolvers, whom we now see kicking against all discipline and order. Nevertheless, these are days in which, in ecclesiastical as well as other matters, daring will not answer without address; and this latter will often alone accomplish an object in which the former will fail. A great and sagacious man, writing two hundred years ago, said—

"That which is thought to have done the Bishops hurt, is their going about to bring men to a blind obedience, imposing things upon them [though perhaps small and well enough] without preparing them, and insinuating into their reasons and fancies. Every man loves to know his commander. I wear those gloves; but perhaps if an alderman should command me, I should think much to do it: what has he to do with me? Or, if he has, peradventure I do not know it. This jumping upon things at first dash will destroy all: to keep up friendship, there must be little addresses and applications, whereas bluntness spoils it

quickly. To keep up the hierarchy, there must be little applications made to men, they must be brought on by little and little. So in the primitive times the power was gained, and so it must be continued. Scaliger said of Erasmus: *Si minor esse voluit, major fuisset.* So we may say of the Bishops, *Si minores esse voluerint, majores fuissent.*"

The Rev. Francis Close, Cheltenham.

To my mind what goes by the name of religion at most fashionable watering-places, instead of being a mild, meek-eyed handmaid, is a pert, pranked-up, talkative miss—to be met with in promenades, in public rooms, to be encountered in morning calls, and to be seen fluttering from house to house, with tripping toe and mincing tongue. This is pretty well the way at Cheltenham. A kind of clerical atmosphere pervades the place: religion there means, for the most part, some favourite parson, and the practice of piety is thought to consist in interminable gossip about doctrines. For my part I was quite sick of the “religious profanity” which I met with on all sides; perhaps the phrase may not be understood, but I mean by it that everlasting frivolous introduction into the trifling concerns and conversations of life, of the most awful of subjects, many weak people mistaking this reprehensible familiarity for true piety.

Of course no one can ever think of Cheltenham without associating the Rev. Francis Close with it. He is essentially “the Man of Cheltenham”—the genius of the place; nothing is begun without him—indeed, he generally begins everything himself; nothing is concluded without him—his consent alone gives the finishing stroke. From Pitville to Montpelier he

“Doth bestride the narrow world,
“Like a Colossus;”

Is there a public meeting, the Rev. Francis Close is in the chair,—Is there a public topic, the Rev. Francis

Close is on the platform,—Are the charity-children regaled with plum-cake and tea, you may see the firm head and broad shoulders of the Rev. Francis Close, presiding amongst the fumes of flowery Pekoe, and the flocks of petticoated philanthropy,—Is there a meeting about railroads, there you find the Rev. Francis Close mightier than the spirit of locomotion itself,—Is there an occasion of public rejoicing, he orders the illumination. Is there an opposition to anything obnoxious, he commands the van. Take up any of the local journals, and the Rev. Francis Close is sure to meet the eye in every second paragraph. I recollect once, during the former mayoralty of my friend John Kerle Haberfield, counting his name thirty-five times in each of the Saturday newspapers of Bristol: this, however, was only an occasional occurrence; the Rev. Francis Close is always before the public. Cast your eyes to the placards on the walls—the Rev. Francis Close stares you in the face, as preaching at Puseyism or thundering against Popery. Is there a Consecration, or clergy meeting, he takes precedence in the public journals of prelates and dignitaries; and the complacent reporter tells us that amongst the company present he noticed, “the Rev. Francis Close, the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, the Archdeacon,” &c., &c.

“Now in the name of all the Gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed,
That he is grown so great?”

I cannot answer the question myself; but I have heard it said that his admirers discharge his butcher's bills quarterly, which, if not idle rumour, is much to the point and purpose. This I know, however, that his friends built him a splendid house; and, instead of making it a parsonage, conveyed it to him as private property for ever. Presents, besides, innumerable crowd to his doors; ladies become solicitors for the honor of enriching him; and a thousand little devices are formed by amiable dowagers for making his lot in life as equable as possible. Indeed, the atmosphere of

Cheltenham seems to be favorable to the cultivation of this charitable virtue, not merely in Mr. Close's case alone, but in that of many of the clergy beside. There appears to be even a kind of rivalry amongst the congregations, each running a race with the other as to which shall most richly reward its favorite preacher: thus, for instance, Mr. Close got a house; but the Rev. Mr. Browne's hearers soon eclipsed the people of the Old Church, by giving their pastor similar accommodation, and furnishing the edifice also. There are numerous minor instances of liberality, that might be quoted, towards other clergymen of the place; the gift system being carried on even to such a minute degree of dress, as to remind one of the present made to Rousseau by the fair and romantic D'Epinay.*

It is some eighteen months, or rather more, since I first saw the Vicar of Cheltenham; and as first impressions are always the most marked and vivid, I shall give an account of that visit, in preference to the more recent one. It was to a Sunday evening service early in Spring; and though prayers had not commenced, I could hardly crush through the porch, so crowded was it with persons anxious, like myself, to hear "The Thunderer of the Place of Waters." I worked my way, as energetically as a man of my age could, up the aisles, which were literally choked with people, and at length got hold of a little man who was busying himself to find accommodation for us all in the few remaining vacant seats, which were nothing amongst so many. I should tell you, that the utmost ingenuity has been used in the old church (which is itself a considerable size), to make it available in every point of accommodation: pews are poised on, and projected from

* "Un jour, qu'il geloit très fort, en ouvrant un paquet qu'elle m'envoyoit, je trouvai un petit jupon de flanelle d'Angleterre, qu'elle me marquoit avoir porté, et dont elle vouloit que je me fisse faire un gilet. Ce soin (continues the author of the Confessions) plus qu'animal me parut si tendre, comme si elle se fût dépouillée pour me vêtir, que dans mon émotion, je baisai vingt fois en pleurant le billet et le jupon."

the most outlandish places—every jutting, frieze and coigne of vantage is employed as a perch for some hearer; so that the whole presents the most extraordinary appearance of wood-work and boxes. Into one of these curious little round-the-corner nooks the sexton showed me: but I was hardly seated when I perceived that from my situation I had no chance of seeing the vicar; and as seeing had a good deal (I confess) to do with my visit, I begged to be moved to some more eligible point. The man, to his credit be it said, complied very civilly with my request; and I was far better accommodated in the second instance, next to an old gentleman, who, before taking his seat, drew an India-rubber cushion from his pocket, and, after blowing into it, sat down on the inflated foundation. I never before saw such a congregation in my life, for the size of the building: it seemed as though they were piled on each others' heads—tier upon tier, they sat with their eyes intent upon the reading-desk, until the vicar, making his appearance from the vestry, occupied his place.

Then this, thought I, is the renowned Mr. Close, of Cheltenham, as turning briskly over the Bible, he marked the lessons, hemming once or twice with the clear emphatic voice of a strong man. I will say that I was not displeased with my first glance; I rather liked his downright brusque look, for I had always associated in my mind something namby-pamby with the idea of a popular preacher. There is not a particle of the latter, however, in the Vicar of Cheltenham; he has a full open face, and a frank, fearless shaped head, firmly set, with rather a thick neck on a broad pair of shoulders: he has a stout figure to correspond, and his whole look and deportment is that of a man used to have his own way, and to lord it at least over Cheltenham: his tone and manner, too, are those of one who is conscious of addressing people who would no more think of questioning what he said, than the Ancients would of giving the lie to the oracles of Delphi. In shape and appearance, and form of face, he reminded me of the

Irish agitator, O'Connell ; nor did his confident manner at all diminish the resemblance. I did not like his reading. I should not, perhaps, call it careless, but it was not impressive : he seemed as if he wished to get through this part of the service quickly, that he might the sooner come to his favourite forte, the sermon, which was, I must say, quite characteristic. After ascending the pulpit stairs with anything but a common place air, he put down his watch on one side of the cushion and his handkerchief on the other, and gave out his text, with singular distinctness, towards different parts of the church. Now, I have heard people say there "is nothing in the preaching" of the Vicar of Cheltenham ; and I went with the full impression that I should find nothing worthy of note—or of a man of his note at least—in the sermon. I was disappointed : he is almost as far superior to what his opponents in the church pronounce him to be, as he is inferior to the estimate which his followers form of him. He is not, it is true, a profound thinker, or a polished speaker, but he is a clear-headed, animated, active, and, I should say, attractive preacher ; he has great confidence and fluency, and, I suspect, a large share of shrewdness and common sense—that is, as much shrewdness and common sense as any man can have who is such a public pet, such a popular idol, amongst his own people. Indeed, the best proof that he must have a strong head is, that it has not been turned long ago by the thousands of weak people, who do little from one end of the year to the other but offer incense to his five senses. I confess I did not go greatly prepossessed in his favour ; yet I as frankly admit I was much interested in his sermon. He was versatile and familiar in his style, and spoke from the pulpit like a paterfamilias, addressing his congregation with an air of parental authority, and the dictation of one who knew his right would not be disputed and whose word was law. There was no mawkishness—no mincing feebleness in his manner ; there was, if anything, too much of the "I'm-monarch-

of-all-I-survey" about both it and his matter. His colloquial passages were the coolest and easiest imaginable pieces of "conversational rhetoric:" for instance, after giving a description of the worship of the Jews in their synagogues, he added, leaning familiarly over the pulpit, and sinking his voice to quite a communicative tone—"I met with this in a little work which you will do well to read: it is by one Vandrangi, a German; it is not expensive, and you'll get it at any of the booksellers in Cheltenham. Mind, inquire for Vandrangi's [I forget the title]. Vandrangi: it was published in London not long since." Upon this out flew the pencils round about me, and the title of the "little work" was dotted down on the blank page of every prayer-book; and I'll be bound the whole edition was bought up next day. This single recommendation from the pulpit of Cheltenham Old Church, was worth a dozen advertisements to the author. Did I write a book, I'd sooner have his patronage for it than that of the two Universities.

The Rev. Francis Close is certainly no common place man. The supremacy he has asserted and acquired over his parishioners is in itself a proof of his ability; for he must know man, and woman, very well—he must have a considerable natural turn for command—to obtain the social empire of the place as he has done: for, mark you, there must be a forward intrepidity about his nature to enable him to "hold his own," or rather more than his own, so far as clerical influence goes, and in such a large place, so long. He does not merely assail his enemies, or what he conceives his enemies, from "Coward's Castle," as some call the pulpit; he does not shrink from confronting them on the platform, whether they be politicians or polemicists; and though, perhaps, he has not always the best of the argument, he has the tact and talent of getting the best of the audience. He is a man of Herculean power in doing work—of indomitable energy, as you must perceive if you only note the number of things of one kind or

another which he gets through in the day : he is at the top and bottom of everything ; and the habit of command and dictation, and driving all before him, which he has fallen into, and of which some people complain, is, I think, created by themselves, and their own notion that nothing can be done without him. If they are so anxious to obey, it is no wonder he should command. He is a sort of surpliced autocrat in the place ; but so far as church accommodation, church building, and church extension go, no man could apply his supremacy to more effective account. His success as a public almoner, too, is not to be lost sight of ; and the amounts collected for various estimable charities through his influence and exertions, as well as the sums drawn from the pockets of the rich and distributed to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, entitle him, as an agent of practical good, to the thanks of society. Such, at least, is the opinion of one who has no disposition to be either the enemy or adulator of the Vicar of Cheltenham.



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